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EXISTING WITHOUT PERMISSION: A VISUAL RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ON BANKSY'S NOLA CHILDREN AND THE BETRAYAL OF AUTHORITY

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A VISUAL RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ON

BANKSY'S NOLA CHILDREN AND THE BETRAYAL OF AUTHORITY

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MASTER'S THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines eight images by the world renowned—and incognito—graffiti street artist known only as Banksy. The eight images are all of lone children; fourteen paintings comprise the total of Banksy's 2008 visit to post-Katrina New Orleans. For the research, the eight images of children are referred to collectively as the "NOLA Children Series." Banksy critics and fans have provided their own names for each piece: Simpsons Boy, Umbrella Girl, Fridge Kite, Levee Boy, Life Preserver Swing, Girl on Stool, and Trumpet Boy 1 & 2. The primary research objective was to understand Banksy's motives for creating these eight "dramas" as he did. Secondarily, the research also advances the interpretative framework for Visual Rhetoric. Close Textual Analysis and Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Pentad combine as methods informed by scholarship in visual design and visual rhetoric. The study concludes by noting Banksy's condemnation of authority figures for their role in betraying the children of New Orleans. Recent studies confirm that the failed levees and failed leadership of 2005 still haunt those who were children when Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Southeast Louisiana.

Keywords: Banksy, visual rhetoric, New Orleans, graffiti art, children

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of any research, in my view, is to answer important questions using credible forms of evidence. Additionally, writing that research process down makes it easier to replicate and revisit over time. As a graduate student, though, I came to this particular research topic indirectly. My professional interest in Visual Design initially had me considering billboards as a form of mass communication worth studying. I looked into billboard placement or "location" as a strategic factor in targeting audiences. But, as I delved into the Masters in Communication program and took courses in the various methods for gathering data and analyzing it, I began to think about how visual images become rhetorical artifacts, capable of communicating a message meant to persuade.

I was already familiar with Banksy as a cultural phenomenon. His political, often satirical graffiti art seemed *subversive* in intent*,* meant to comment upon and even undermine established systems of authority, especially those that lead to human suffering. I say "seemed subversive" because Banksy is famous for painting provocative images that don't immediately reveal their rhetorical intent. It takes time to think through what might be going on in Banksy's works, which made me wonder why he risks so much only to frame his messages within a puzzle of themes. Banksy even subverts the concept of "identity," as this graffiti artist's identity remains unknown after decades of work in dozens of cities across the globe. I had seen the documentary *Banksy Does New York* when it came out in 2014, and I was intrigued by the immediate response people had to Banksy's work. While the authorities, police and city officials, even the governor, were calling the 31 works of art in 31 days "vandalism" and disruptive, the people of New

York seemed energized and honored by the visit. Buildings "vandalized" in the process of his visit actually, as the documentary says, went up in value. Of the 31 images left behind, some were immediately torn from building facades and sold at auction. Banksy does not receive any money for his public graffiti and prefers to donate his art and any indirect proceeds to charity. His anti-commercialism, anti-establishment ethos also appealed to me.

And yet, to research Banksy's entire catalogue would take years. I knew I needed to limit my focus to a particular location and for a particular purpose. I narrowed my selection to two places where Banksy's work had received a lot of coverage and a range of critical reviews: The nine images on the concrete portion of the West Bank wall on the Palestinian side, done in 2005—or, the 14 images around the city of New Orleans painted during his visit there in 2008. Both of these locations seemed to have high rhetorical promise. My background in the military might have led me to select the West Bank location over New Orleans, simply because of the many images there that featured soldiers. But, it was my mother who taught me to have a big heart and remember that "God doesn't punish children." She often talked about the "aesthetic of the child," or that children are innocent. And, when children are devastated by a disaster or a war, their scars last a lifetime. Because of my mother, and because I had just discovered I was about to have my first child and become a father myself, I decided that I could learn a lot by focusing just on the images of children in either location.

It was a single painting from Banksy's 2008 New Orleans visit that helped me to make my location decision. Banksy's "Umbrella Girl," the only image of the New Orleans series that I knew about before the study, intrigued me. I didn't understand it

completely, but I was moved by the artistic quality of the piece and the uniquely "American feel" of the depiction of the girl. I always wondered how this England-based graffiti artist managed to make Umbrella Girl look so American. Out of the 14 paintings Banksy left in New Orleans, eight of them were children. My decision basically came down to choosing the location with the greatest opportunity to study the treatment of children. From here on out, I will reference these eight paintings in New Orleans as Banksy's NOLA Children Series. In making the final decision, I also knew that I would have almost as much to learn about the underlying narrative of post-Katrina New Orleans, in my own country, as I would need to learn about the West Bank conflicts. I had always wanted to know more about the effects of Hurricane Katrina on the people of New Orleans, and this opportunity to learn through the lens of Banksy's work seemed like the perfect opportunity. While this study is not designed to encompass the history before and after Hurricane Katrina made landfall in 2005, I will address the history briefly in my conclusion.

I started to draft the design of my research by questioning the issue of sequencing and whether Banksy intentionally ordered his paintings. Did the sequence of the NOLA Children tell a larger story? It turns out, no record of the order of the paintings survives, so a narrative analysis became less likely. Banksy did choose an unusual time to visit New Orleans, however. As Hurricane Gustav was bearing down about three years to the day after Hurricane Katrina's August 29, 2005 landfall, those who were traumatized by the earlier storm joined swarms of people across the Gulf Coast in the largest evacuation in United States history. When the people of New Orleans returned, they were greeted with Banksy's 14 images, somehow painted during Gustav's heavy winds and rain.

The purpose of this research is to identify the dramatic, rhetorical motives behind Banksy's NOLA Children Series. Starting with the assumption that this artist's motives for creating each of the eight "dramas" are hidden behind the collective themes found within the images, this research is designed to illuminate the social and cultural value of Banksy's work as an important commentary on the human condition.

In Chapter 2, the Literature Review, three areas were identified to help me build a foundation of knowledge from which to analyze Banksy's work. A section on Visual Rhetoric explores the concepts of this newer sub-discipline, beginning with the fundamentals proposed by Aristotle over two thousand years ago and exploring the scholarship from the end of the last century to this one. This section of the literature review ends with a question: **"How are the principles of rhetoric implemented through visual design?"**

The second section of the literature review attempts to build on what was learned about visual rhetoric by focusing on the scholarship, elements, principles and practices of Visual Design. After a review of the elements and principles, with examples, this section of the literature review closes out with a question of its own: **"How do visual design strategies work in a selected series of images to evoke a collective message?"**

The third and last section of the literature review explores Banksy's reputation (ethos) and strategies as a global street artist. It identifies a personal motive for his work and sets the stage for talking about his rhetorical motives for the NOLA Children Series. This section also ends with a question designed to bring the entire literature review into one framework: **"What can rhetorical theory and visual design teach us about Banksy's rhetorical motives for creating the NOLA children series?"**

Following the Literature Review, the study then turns to Chapter 3, Methodology, to identify and justify the two methods that will be used to gather and analyze the "data" collected. Specifically, through the use of Close Textual Analysis (CTA), the paintings will all be subjected to an inventory process, seeking to identify the visual rhetorical strategies and visual design principles at work in each of the eight paintings. Following this process, it then becomes easier to apply Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Pentad to each of the paintings, identifying the act, the scene, the agent, the agency, and the purpose for each of the "dramas" Banksy created. Then, for each of the paintings, the two most dominant features of the Pentad are identified and assembled into a ratio. It is at this point that Banksy's motive for the drama depicted in each painting comes into clearer focus. Burke's theory of Dramatism and his Pentadic exercise are uniquely suited to reveal the rhetor's motive for constructing a particular drama in a particular way.

After Chapter 3, the work of analysis begins in Chapter 4, Results and Discussion. Informed by the literature review and driven by the chosen methods, each of Banksy's eight paintings that comprise the NOLA Children Series will be described in terms that correspond with visual design principles and visual rhetorical concepts. This section of Chapter 4 is the "results" portion; what follows is then the "discussion" portion designed to analyze the patterns and themes revealed through this elaborate process.

Chapter 5 is the Conclusion where a brief history of the effects of Hurricane Katrina will lead into a restatement of the research questions and a summary of the research findings. This chapter closes with an argument for the need to expand on the scholarship of visual rhetoric and offers opportunities for future research into Banksy's work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To interpret the persuasive intent of any image, viewers of that image would do well to explore the basic principles of visual design and the visual rhetorical strategies available to the image creator. This literature review is designed to provide both the visual design and visual rhetoric foundation and to explore the "conversation" scholars are engaged in on those topics and on the particular work of Banksy. The review is broken up into three categories: visual rhetoric, visual design, and critiques of Banksy's work as rhetorical artifact informed by visual design. The first section begins with Aristotle's three modes of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. After a discussion of visual literacy, the review explores the work by the father of visual rhetoric, Roland Barthes.

The second section of this review is concerned with Visual Design and explores Paul Rand's criticisms of the fine arts today and the Bauhaus School's influence on the construction of visual design elements and principles. Before a brief exploration of Molly Bang's contributions toward an understanding of visual associations to shape and color, and a description of Scott McCloud's 2014 analysis of abstract images, this section includes a glossary of visual design elements and principles, complete with examples.

The third section explores the critiques of globally recognized but incognito street artist Banksy. Each category of the literature review will conclude with the questions that remain relevant to the motivations for Banksy's particular artistic style and the larger context of the eight paintings that constitute the NOLA Children Series.

<u>Visual Rhetoric</u>

In order to discuss what visual rhetoric is, we must first start with the concept of rhetoric. Rhetoric is an interpretive theory that frames a message as an interested party's attempt to influence an audience (Scott, 1994). The sender's intention is understood to manifest in the argument, the evidence, the order of argumentation, and the style of delivery. The formal elements are selected according to the sender's expectations about how the audience will approach the genre, the speaker, and the topic (Burke, 1969; Corbett, 1965; Scott, 1994). Aristotle first characterized the basic features of rhetoric by defining the *"rhetorical triangle"* comprised of three modes of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos concerns the character of the speaker, speaker credibility and the demonstration of "good will" toward the audience. Much of ethos can be discerned by a speaker's reputation. Pathos is the use of emotional appeals the speaker deploys. Logos concerns the form and usage of logic, often in the form of syllogistic arguments and statistics. Aristotle explains his rhetorical triangle in specific terms:

"Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker [ethos]; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind [pathos]; the third of the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself [logos]. Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible (Aristotle 1356a 2, 3).

The use of ethos and the demand for speaker credibility is an important feature of this portion in the triangle. Aristotle lists three prerequisites necessary for the appearance of credibility: competence, good intention, and empathy. Competence is

displayed by demonstrating the ability to follow through and finish successfully. Not only do speakers identify with their audiences, but they must follow through and abide by the moral parameters they express. Audiences need to know that they are regarded highly and will not be taken advantage of. Additionally, speakers need to demonstrate understanding and shared common ground or connection and identification with their audiences. This identification self-portrayal can be done through nonverbal and paraverbal factors, including the use of voice, gesture, facial expressions, proxemics, body language and movement. In order to become effective, stating the correct message isn't enough; the proper gestures need to correlate in order to insinuate the proper emotion while delivering the message. Simply just stating happiness doesn't have much effect when delivered with the opposing emotion. This can come off as sarcasm which can lead an audience to view the speaker as condescending, thereby undermining the essential "good will" toward the audience required for good ethos.

While Aristotle designed his rhetorical triangle for "the spoken word" or written text, there are obvious analogues to visual rhetoric as well. For example, ethos can be demonstrated using similar painting techniques already used on established visual images—in order to advance credibility for the new work. Banksy sometimes uses a signature, so his reputation for artistic competence and profound social commentary comes with him. As Aristotle claimed, ethos-driven persuasion "is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible." In the case of visual rhetoric, and Banksy's work in particular, persuasion is achieved by the artist's long-established reputation for exposing the devastation caused by unbridled capitalism, commercialism, industrialized war and other threats to

humanity. By shining a light on these threats through art-worthy visual images, Banksy re-establishes his good will, his empathy, and his competence.

The second mode of persuasion from this equation is pathos, or emotional appeals. The speaker has several approaches to evoke emotions from or through the audience. The strongest emotional appeals often align with audience values and belief systems. These appeals can easily backfire if the approach used contradicts with known audience perspectives. By delivering a speech that correlates with an audience's values and beliefs, the speaker can "move" an audience from where they are to where the speaker wants them to be. If the speaker fails to connect emotional appeals to where the audience currently is, the result can be disastrous.

American political discourse often provides good examples of appeals to pathos. Politicians deliver speeches to help influence their party's voters to maintain their loyalty by expressing the same and similar values already held by the audience. By establishing common ground with their audience, they create a relationship founded on trust and supported by the expression of shared values.

One particular example of the use of "common ground" and identification with the audience occurred immediately following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in April of 1968. Then presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy faced an Indianapolis crowd and needed to announce the death of Dr. King to people who didn't share Kennedy's religious, racial, and economic background. In an impromptu decision, Kennedy recalled the assassination of his brother, President John F. Kennedy, five years earlier to identify with the audience's loss of MLK:

"For those of you who are black and are tempted to fill with -- be filled with

hatred and mistrust of the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I would

only say that I can also feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a

member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man" (American

Rhetoric, par. 4).

Here, Kennedy is explicitly recalling emotional choices upon hearing of the death

of Martin Luther King, Jr. Without even naming "the member of his family," Kennedy

connects the audience where they are to what he is trying to persuade. He does this by

giving them an incomplete mental image, forcing them to "fill in the blanks" and

participate in the argument. This is also an example of an enthymeme, where the larger

argument--"All who have had a family member killed feel a certain way, I have had a

family member killed, I feel the same as you do"—is truncated to its middle premise, and

the audience can identify with the speaker even they participate in the construction of his

argument. Kennedy shows good will toward his audience in his "elevation" of MLK to

the entire crowd's "family member," and he shows he understands how they feel before

offering choices for how to channel their valid and shared emotions.

Using certain techniques and presentation styles that create or enhance emotions

can increase the likelihood that the rhetor is successful in persuading an audience.

Aristotle had this to say about the use of pathos:

"The Emotions are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their

judgements, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure. Such are anger, pity,

fear and the like, with their opposites. We must arrange what we have to say

about each of them under three heads. Take, for instance, the emotion of anger:

here we must discover (1) what the state of mind of angry people is, (2) who the

people are with whom they usually get angry, and (3) on what grounds they get angry with them" (Rhetoric, 1378a 1,9).

As with ethos, the pathos of a written text can also be visually expressed. Appeals to emotion in visual rhetoric include the use of color, especially intense color. Visual rhetoric can also suggest shared values and common ground through the use of familiar images that evoke sympathy. Metaphoric images can make us laugh and cry and be impressed by the cleverness of the image. A black and white image can seem serious and somber. By adding intense color to a black and white image, we sense tension and drama.

The third mode of persuasion is through logic (logos). Typically, verbal appeals to logic take the form of statistics, of syllogisms, enthymemes, arguments and the warrants that support them, and a demonstration of knowledge through reliable facts and figures. Like ethos and pathos, the aim of logos is to create a persuasive effect. However, even the appearance of logical reasoning, through the use of "thus" and "therefore" to suggest parts of an argument, can be sufficient in the moment to persuade an audience. Aristotle identified two different forms of proofs: the natural and the artificial/technical proof. The latter are those proofs that are created with combinations of information (hints, examples, etc.) and the art of logic. He goes on to say that persuasion "is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question" (Rhetorics, 1356a 2,3).

Figure 1 Labeled for Reuse: Figure 2 Harley Davidson Print Advertisement,
https://www.flickr.com/photos/1st5ive/413485341/in/photostream/

The Harley-Davidson ad is a good example of ethos, pathos, and logos working together to persuade through visual images. Ethos appeals include the lower right hand Harley-Davidson logo, representing an iconic American corporation with an easily recognizable brand and well-established reputation. Their website splash page focuses primarily on their ethos as a company:

"Fulfilling dreams of personal freedom is more than a phrase. It's our purpose and our passion. We bring a commitment [to] exceptional customer experiences to everything we do – from the innovation of our products to the precision of our manufacturing – culminating with our strong supplier and dealer networks. We are Harley-Davidson" (Harley-Davidson Corporate Website).

As for pathos, the ad above appeals to humor through the use of metaphor. Metaphor compares two largely unlike things in order to call attention to what is similar. In this case, viewers of the ad are asked to compare the hospital worker's stance while pushing a patient around in a wheel chair—to the "dream" of riding a Harley. The phrase

"Stop Dreaming" points both to the literal meaning of the stance and the argument by comparison viewers need to unpack in order to understand the image. The very process of resolving the metaphoric argument engages readers in the logic or logos of the ad. All metaphors can be rendered as a syllogism or three part argument:

> Major Premise: All who posture as if riding a Harley while doing something else are dreaming.
>
> Minor Premise: The hospital worker is posturing as if riding a Harley.
>
> Conclusion: The hospital worker is dreaming.
>
> In this ad, as in Banksy's works, visual appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos help to

accomplish the persuasive goals of the rhetor. In this case, the rhetor is Harley-Davidson, and we can assume that the rhetorical goals have something to do with getting people to purchase their own Harley and, "stop dreaming."

Visual rhetoric describes how visual images communicate and attempt to persuade using strategies that are analogous to the strategies used in verbal messages. Viewers of rhetorical images are tasked with trying to interpret what an image is attempting to communicate. According to *Current Issues and Enduring Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking and Argument* (2007), visual rhetoric differs from visual design because the former emphasizes images "as sensory expressions of cultural meaning" while the latter primarily considers the aesthetics of the design (in the chapter *"Visual Rhetoric: Images as Arguments"*). Visual rhetorical examples can include charts, paintings, sculpture, video games, diagrams, web pages, advertisements, movies, architecture, newspapers, and photographs. To be visually rhetorical is a conscious communicative decision; the colors, form, medium, and size are *chosen on purpose*.

According to rhetorical scholar Sonja Foss, examples of visual rhetoric must have three characteristics: "They must be symbolic, involve human intervention, and be presented to an audience for the purpose of communicating" (*Framing*, 304-5). Visual rhetoric can be broken into many sub-categories because the term covers such a broad area, one of which is known as "semiotics." The Semiotics Society of America defines semiotics as "study of signs and sign systems….relevant to the sciences, social sciences, and humanities alike" (SSOA). In particular, semiotics studies how an image holds and delivers meaning. Another sub-category of visual rhetoric studies the persuasiveness of an image as a trope. The term *visual rhetoric* falls under an umbrella term known as visual literacy, which is generally split into three categories: visual thinking, visual learning, visual rhetoric/communication (though clearly visual thinking and visual learning must occur in order to communicate visually). The following diagram illustrates these ideas. The graphic is modified from Sandra Moriarty's diagram in her essay, "A Conceptual Map of Visual Communication" and from "Teaching Visual Literacy and Document Design in First-Year Composition" (MA Thesis) by Allen Brizee.
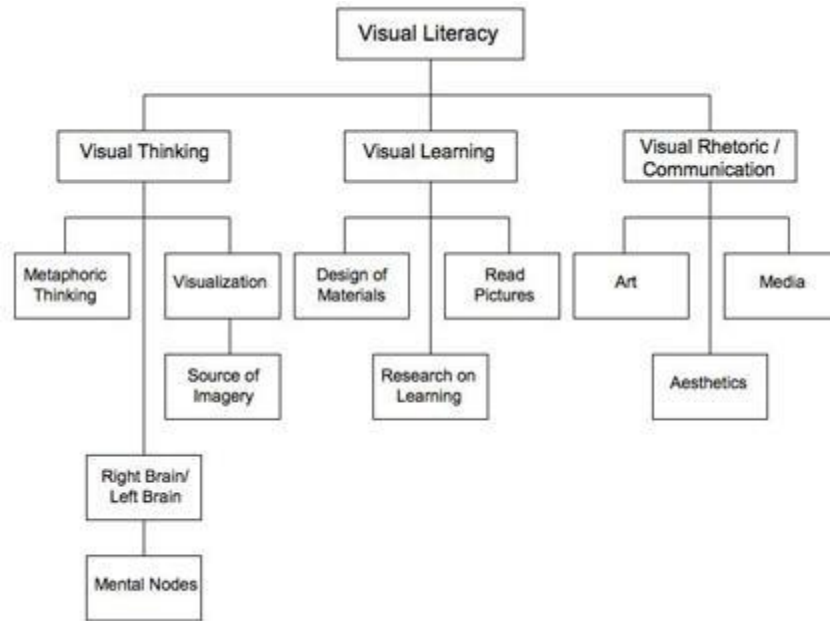
Figure 3 Conceptual Map of Visual Communication

Essentially, a beginning definition of visual rhetoric and its applications include

the use of images as argument (Ethos and Logos), the arrangement of elements on a page

(Pathos), the use of typography, including fonts (Ethos and Pathos), and analysis of

existing images and visuals. The term "visual rhetoric" emerged largely as a mechanism

to set aside a certain area of study and to focus attention on the specific rhetorical traits of

visual media. According to rhetorical scholar Sonja Foss, the focus for visual rhetoric is

on the contextual response rather than the aesthetic response Foss goes on to explain that

an aesthetic response "consists of a viewer's direct perceptual encounter with the sensory

aspects of the artifact. In a rhetorical response, in contrast, meaning is attributed to the

artifact" (Foss, 2004). Colors, lines, textures, and rhythms in an artifact provide a basis

for the viewer to infer the existence of images, emotions, and ideas (p. 311). In the book

Defining Visual Rhetorics (2004) by Charles A. Hill, the editor asks, "How, exactly, do

images persuade? In other words, how do representational images work to influence the beliefs, attitudes, opinions and sometimes actions of those who view them (p. 25). This research intends to answer this question relative to Banksy's NOLA Children Series.

Convincing people to change their mind or to take a stand, especially on important policy issues, can be exceedingly difficult for several reasons. It seems hard enough to persuade one person, let alone a group of people, to accept our persuasive appeals. Aligned with Aristotle's definition of logos, pathos, and ethos with regard to written or oral rhetoric, "the effectiveness of any particular appeal on any complex issue will be greatly affected by how much the appeal supports or conflicts with the beliefs, values, and assumptions that the audience members already hold about relevant topics" (28). The rhetorical artifact, whether textual or visual, will be more effective if the audience shares the values and views being expressed. It makes more sense to deliver a visual message about the extreme hardship in the aftermath from Hurricane Katrina in the streets of Louisiana than it would to illustrate this catastrophic event in the back alleys of London. In many ways, the surrounding reminders of the devastation of Katrina help to situate and underscore the arguments New Orleans street artists are making. A visual rhetorical work in context can also create a stronger relationship to its viewers. Additionally, viewers who have a shared experience, especially in a disaster, will develop a relationship to other, like-minded survivors of the disaster. According to J. Cederblom, author of "Willingness to Reason and the Identification of the Self" (1989), people often accept and come to defend a particular viewpoint, not because they have carefully thought through and evaluated the available alternatives, but because they identify with other people holding the same position -- or because challenging or denying the position

would challenge their own self-concept (p. 152). Ultimately, while the first viewers of

Banksy's NOLA Children Series—who might also be survivors—share a common bond,

they will also share a bond with the visual rhetoric that testifies to their suffering and

struggle.

How can the artist bring the attention of these particular issues to its viewing

audience? This can be done partly by the simple act of explicitly naming and pointing out

those elements: "By the very fact of selecting certain elements and presenting them to the

audience, their importance and pertinence to the discussion are implied (Hill, p. 28).

Presence, as the term is used by argumentation theorists Chaim Perelman and Lucie

Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971), refers to the extent to which an object or concept is foremost in

the consciousness of the audience or viewers. Presence is the complaint that needs to be

fixed. In rhetorical scholar Lloyd Bitzer's 1968 theory of the "Rhetorical Situation,"

presence and "exigence" are similar. If an image is intended to persuade against the

practice of child slave labor, a child will be central to the image; everything relates back

to the child. The rhetor's ultimate goal, whenever possible, is to make the relevant object,

concept or value "fill the audience's entire field of consciousness." Competing

interpretations of a work will be forced out of consciousness because they lack the

"presence" needed to sustain it. Presence is a concept that is linked to visual perception

(Hill, p. 118).

In the chapter "The rhetoric of the image,*"* Roland Barthes identifies three

important messages within an image: the linguistic, the coded iconic, and the non-coded

iconic message. By identifying each of these messages, viewers can learn to answer key

questions about the intended meaning of the image. The linguistic message is the text

within the image. The text can be denotative or not intending to evoke emotion, or it can be connotative. Connotative text suggests emotional associations. Barthes claims that almost all images, in all contexts, are accompanied by some sort of linguistic message either as "anchorage" (text used to focus on one of the many potential interpretations an image can evoke) or "relay" (text that adds meaning and reinforces the image by working with it to convey meaning.)

The symbolic message (or connoted/coded iconic message) is comprised of non-textual images that are intended to evoke emotions and associations with the image. The literal message (or denoted/non-coded iconic message) is that in which the signifier and the signified are basically the same; no associations with something else are intended: a picture of a tomato is intended to signify a tomato. This tomato would be a non-coded image: what you see is what is literally meant.

While Barthes' analysis focused primarily on the interpretation of advertising images, his types of messages help viewers of visual rhetoric learn to "de-code" the persuasive content of the image. Any image can be ambiguous, suggesting multiple interpretations and open to viewer discretion. In order to persuade large groups of people, images benefit from textual "anchors" or "relays" to help narrow down the interpretive choices. Barthes calls the signifiers (the material form of the things being displayed) within an image "connotators" or all the visual elements that can be used to connote signifieds (or the intended concepts or meanings). He then states that the entire set of connotators is the "rhetoric of the image," and all the visual elements within an image that can be employed as signifiers. Those visual elements that are not connotators remain as denotative elements (not intended to serve as "connotators") within the image frame.

For this study, Barthes work is essential for understanding how to approach and interpret an image's intended meaning. Combined with Aristotle's three modes of persuasion, rendered as visual components, Barthes' work helps to develop a repertoire of visual rhetorical strategies used to persuade.

A Summary of Rhetorical Devices

Rhetorical devices are elements that a speaker uses to persuade the audience or the viewers of persuasive messages. Since 2004 and Sonja Foss' "Framing the Study of Visual Rhetorics: Toward a Transformation of Rhetorical Theory," the last decade has seen considerable effort to make existing rhetorical strategies work for visual artifacts. Elements such as such as **metaphor**, **argument**, **enthymeme**, **ethos**, **evidence**, **narrative**, and **stasis** are all covered in Foss' review. The elements of **presence**, **synecdoche**, and **irony**—while not covered by Foss explicitly—are now commonly recognized strategies for creating visual rhetorical artifacts that are open to analysis. Below is an exploration of each of the strategies that will figure prominently in this study:

Metaphor is an implicit comparison between two mostly dissimilar things. In text and visual images, metaphor is an argument used in order to highlight the small similarities between the two parts of the comparison. Every metaphor contains both a "tenor" (the literal part of the comparison, the subject actually being talked about) and a "vehicle" (the figurative part of the comparison, the thing that is being used to talk about the subject). The construction for metaphor is always "tenor as vehicle." For example, if Banksy paints an umbrella that is meant to be compared to a levee (both are two different things, but they share in common their role in protecting people from water), we

understand the umbrella is the "vehicle"—the figurative thing being used to talk about the literal tenor, the levee. In speech, and in visual images, often only the vehicle is expressed. In those cases, it is up to the reader of text and the viewer of images to figure out the tenor and unpack the argument: this vehicle can be compared to this tenor in these ways. While metaphor is one way to structure an argument, other ways include using an **enthymeme** (an incomplete three-part syllogism) to provoke viewers into filling in the other parts of the syllogism. Visual enthymemes withhold a missing premise or conclusion, forcing viewers to complete the syllogism and participate in the argument's construction. Aristotle knew, even two thousand years ago, that getting an audience to participate in the construction of an argument accomplished a good deal of the work in getting them to accept the argument. Aristotle's **ethos**, pathos, and logos are appeals to credibility, emotion, and logic that support arguments. Presenting **evidence** visually is done by highlighting or displaying facts, examples, and logical appeals in order to support an argument. **Narrative** arguments occur visually by offering parts of the story, leading the viewer to, again, fill in the missing parts of the story. **Stasis**, as a visual rhetorical component, concerns the absence of movement, the tension that occurs in an image before movement would be expected. **Presence** is related to identification. It is measured by the relationship of the viewer of to the image, with first-hand experience generating the highest degree of presence. Metonymy is often confused with metaphor; however, metonymy is an image's figurative argument that claims what is seen is *related* to what is meant. The most common form of metonymy is **synecdoche**, where the relationship between what is seen and what is meant is part-to-whole or whole-to-part. For example, Banksy often uses images of children in his graffiti art. The lone child is

meant to represent all children, making it a part-to-whole relationship between what is seen and what is meant. His use of a life preserver ring in one of the images he painted in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina may also be a synecdoche. In this case, the life preserver ring is a significant representative of the entire rescue and relief effort during the flooding of the city. The life preserver ring is related to the rescue effort, but—unlike with metaphor—it does not ask the viewer to compare what is seen to something very different. Metonymy asks the viewer to use the image that is seen as a referent to a related concept or thing.

Irony can be visually displayed fairly easily, compared to other rhetorical strategies. To express irony verbally, we use the opposite language of what we mean and what is expected given the contextual cues of the statement. This "expected" component of irony can be seen in the sentence, "The fire boat burned and sank." That the fireboat is expected to put out the fires on other boats, its burning becomes ironic. That all boats are designed to float makes this boat's sinking an ironic twist. In examples of visual rhetoric, critics should seek for those instances where what is being displayed is the opposite of what is expected. Banksy's Umbrella Girl is a good example of irony in that the umbrella, meant to protect people from rain, is actually the cause of the rain.

Sonja Foss also adds concepts to the visual rhetorical repertoire that were directly borrowed from visual design, such as color, space, and texture. For this study, we will maintain the distinction between visual rhetoric and visual design before synthesizing them for the final analysis. After reviewing the emerging theories about visual rhetoric, one question remains: **How are the principles of rhetoric implemented through visual design?**

<u>Visual Design</u>

Borrowed from the Canadian schools system and used initially to teach children reading literacy for written texts, Ellen Christou, Tess Evers, and Sharne Vickers offer an online tool for visual literacy. The authors outline four "cueing systems" for helping students deconstruct and discerning the meaning of visual texts:

"All viewers draw on cues from a text to make sense [of] what they are viewing. Cues include semantic, graphic/technical, syntactic, and pragmatic. During deconstructing and viewing visual texts, effective viewers use all cues interdependently. It is essential that children from an early age are provided with opportunities to build their knowledge of each cue" (*Interpreting*, par. 1).

The semantic, graphic/technical, syntactic, and pragmatic visual "cueing systems" are analogous to textual cues and form a "grammar" of visual elements. The following descriptions are adapted (and sometimes annotated) from the Christou, Evers, and Vickers website:

Semantic Cues: these cues are knowledge-based and include cultural and world knowledge, a viewer's own knowledge of the topic, and recognizable features of the visual text. Viewers rely on semantic cues to make personal connections to the text and make sense of what they are viewing to discover overall meaning (par. 2).

Syntactic Cues: these cues are found within the organization and structure of visual texts. Visual grammar features, including *balance, layout, reading paths, and vectorality* (the way visual elements direct the eye around and across an

image) help the viewer to make sense of the big picture. Image patterns and visual

design knowledge are also included in visual grammar (par. 3).

Graphic/Technical Cues: viewers draw on graphic/technical cues to focus on

identifying, locating, selecting, navigating and making meaning from a variety of

visual texts (par. 4).

Pragmatic Cues: these cues are comprised of the creative choices made by visual

text designers. Viewers of the visual text look for image framing, camera shots,

lines, shapes, color, texture and size to understand the effect of a visual image

(par.5).

If viewers of visual images use cues to discern meaning, then visual designers

must be strategists. They use established principles and basic elements to express a

hidden or explicit message, thought, belief, or emotion effectively. Those who try to

understand those "hidden or explicit" messages benefit from an awareness of visual

design strategies. As well-known graphic designer Paul Rand, who had taken the

principles of the German Bauhaus school of design and applied them to visual creations

of corporate identity, once claimed that the goal of learning about visual design principles

and the basic elements is to understand them as strategies (1992). Rand cautioned,

however, that the focus of contemporary visual design was shifting from the privileging

of the idea and content to that of self and style. Specifically, visual designs risked being

valued more for their technical expertise than their communicative effectiveness. New

and trendy designs were winning out over effective messaging. The long-established

Bauhaus philosophy of design, premised on effective communication, was losing

influence. Rand especially complained about the quality of the work he was seeing:

"Lack of humility and originality and the obsession with style [seems] to
encourage these excesses. The absence of restraint, the equation of simplicity with
shallowness, complexity with depth of understanding, and obscurity with
innovation, distinguishes the quality of work of these times" (par. 7).

Years later, street artist Banksy appeared to agree with Rand: "All artists are
prepared to suffer for their work but why are so few prepared to learn to draw?" (Banksy,
p. 10-11). Rand also lamented the fall from the previous recognition of "remarkable
artists" and the rise of today's celebration of "acknowledged individuals" (1992, par. 4).
He was concerned that our obsession with what was new and trendy would undermine
our ability to even recognize profound works of art and encourage ignorance within the
art world. Both in education and in business graphic design, Rand claimed, too often "the
blind are leading the blind" (par. 20).

The mechanics of visual design elements are best described from the German
architectural school Bauhaus. Bauhaus' philosophy brought all works of art underneath
one umbrella and incorporated cross-disciplines within the arts. A focus on visual
communication (visual design) emerged, with the primary learning objective of
professional education in visual design focused on those skills and competencies intended
to communicate a thought content that could be transposed into the visual (Bauhaus,
1969). In the 1940s, Bauhaus syllabi illustrated the basic elements involved with visual
communication: the visual vocabulary of point, line, texture, value, color, intensity,
transparency, plane, volume, direction, rhythm, and tension, to be acquired in the first

year of study and applied purposefully as tools of communication (p. 206). Each of these elements deserves further explanation.

The study of semiotics, as mentioned in the above section on Visual Rhetoric, also relates to the elements of visual design. While semiotics is the exploration of communicating through signs and symbols, visual design arranges those signs and symbols through the "composition" of visual design principles. While it is difficult to get any two sources on visual design to agree on the particular array of concepts, the federal government provides resources for visual designers that break the basics into two categories: basic elements of visual design and the principles for creating a visual design (*Usability,* n.d.).

Visual Design Basics and Principles

The basic **elements** of visual design, according to the government's "usability" resources, include concepts that should be familiar to anyone with even a limited understanding of design. The basic elements that combine to create visual designs include **lines**, **shapes**, **color palette**, **texture**, **typography** and **form**.

Lines connect two points and can be used to help define shapes, make divisions, and create textures. All straight lines have a length, width, and direction. **Shapes** are self-contained areas. Every object is composed of shapes that can be defined by lines, differences in color, texture, or value. A **color palette** is the use of combinations of colors to make objects stand out, create depth, add emphasis, and help organize information. A visual designer would be knowledgeable about color theory in order to choose colors that correspond with the psychological impact they want to achieve. **Texture** refers to how a surface "feels"; textures can be formed by the repetition of

elements like lines or shapes, creating a pattern of texture. Certain textures will attract the viewer, while others will serve as background. **Typography** includes the fonts that are chosen and font size, alignment, color and spacing (between lines, between letters, etc.). **Form** applies to three-dimensional objects and describes their volume and mass. Two or more shapes can create a form; adding tones, textures, and colors to the form can enhance it (*Usability*, n.d.).

In order to figure out how to use the seven basic elements described above, visual designers apply the following nine **principles** and bring them together in a way that accomplishes the communication goals of the design. Applying design principles to the basic elements can be confusing at first. It helps to first identify the communication goals and work from a selection of elements and applied principles to achieve them. Those nine principles include **unity**, **gestalt**, **space**, **hierarchy**, **balance**, **contrast**, **scale**, **dominance**, and **similarity**. Each of the principles will be described and combined with an annotated example, so as to clarify their meaning. For ease of comprehension, the first principle, **unity**, is combined with the last principle, **similarity**.

1.   **Unity** occurs when the parts of a composition have something in common

and appear to belong together. Visual designers often try to strike a balance between variety and unity to keep the design engaging and avoid overwhelming the viewer.

There are several patterns flowing in various directions on this portion of a bandana; however, the shapes in the patterns are similar.

The shapes do differ in size, but their outlines are the same paisley shape of an oval curved to a point. This repeated shape is actually an example of **similarity** (which is number 9 on the list of principles but will be handled here). **9. Similarity** refers to creating the perception of cohesion or continuity throughout a design. It is important, though, to recognize that similarity is not duplication. The shapes are "similar," but they differ in size enough to suggest that they are similar, not the same. The lines that serve as borders on the bandana "contain" the larger shapes and separate them from the smaller paisley shapes outside the border. Though the patterns are separated it still looks like they belong together. This feeling of the different shapes belonging to the same whole is **gestalt**.

2. **Gestalt**, as a visual design principle, refers to the ability to help users perceive the overall design, rather than the individual elements. This is often achieved through the careful arrangement of elements (shapes, lines, etc.) in order to emphasize the overall design.
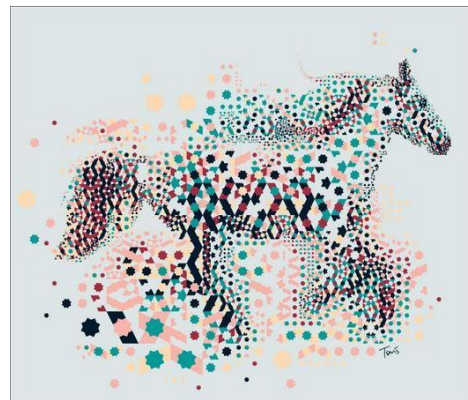
Figure 1 Licensed for reuse

 The picture of the horse forces our minds to group together the various elements, create order, and make connections so that we perceive "a whole" image. In this case, the whole is an image of a horse, not just a collection of various shapes, colors, lines, and textures. By applying the principle of **gestalt** to these elements, we arrive at something more than the sum of the parts.

3. **Space** is "defined when something is placed in it" (White, p.17). Space

can reduce "noise" from a busy design. It can also create the illusion of time and movement, giving the eye a space to rest. **White space** is also known as negative space, meaning the space is unused. White space is an important part of design strategy because it relieves the eye and helps viewers know where to focus.

The dice in this picture are arranged with space considerations. The large amount of white space allows the viewer to focus on the six dice, their shadows, and the repetition of details. Notice, too, that the five dice to the left appear to have "movement" away from the lone cube on the right. White space is also emphasizing the distance between the five dice on the left and the single dice to the right.
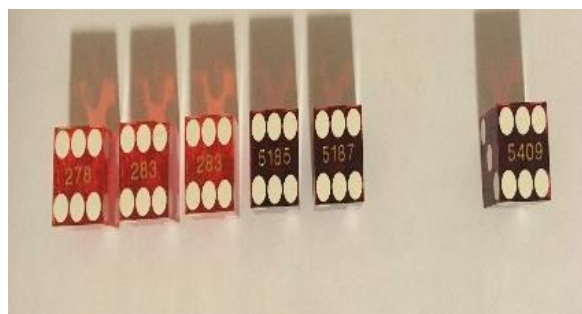
Figure 2 Open source license

The set of dice to the left represent "positive space" or the design effects of "filling up" the design with non-white space elements. Notice that the lack of space, negative or positive, between the dice suggests a lack of movement. The added reflection of the dice on the black surface extends the image and creates no relief for the viewer.

4.   **Hierarchy** refers to the principle of distinguishing significance between items in a design. Using different type or font sizes on a newspaper, different colors from intense to pale, and placement can all signal a rank ordering of elements. In Western culture, items at the top and the left are perceived as more important than those at the

bottom or right.

      In this image, from a top-down emphasis, the Rubik's Cube would be the most important area, where the eye would first focus. Second, the eye would travel to the dice and lastly to the pen. There are multiple ways to emphasize the importance of the elements, including by contrast, dominance, and scale. Hierarchy as determined by scale would switch the order from the cube to the pen to the dice. Shape and color can also signal hierarchy; here, the pen and dice are the same color, giving them added weight together. Shape, though, combines the cube and the dice, as they are both cube shapes. That could signal hierarchy by shape.

      5.   **Balance** is the structuring of the image to have equal weight on both sides of the central point. Symmetrical and asymmetrical are two forms of balance. Symmetrical images are exact reflections on both sides of the direct middle. Asymmetrical images cannot be equally divided, but there are ways to counter balance any differences in "weight." Balancing an image can be done by font, color, shape, and texture. The importance of balancing is to keep the viewer from trailing off; successful balance maintains the viewer's attention. White space, as mentioned above, also has the same effect. It helps the viewer to stay in the bounds of the design and makes us look where the designer intended us to look.

Balance - Symmetrical

By placing a vertical meridian through this image, we can see the approximate image repeated on both sides. Both halves contain the same appearance, color, image, weight, and scale. The same would happen if we placed the meridian at the horizontal or diagonal axis.
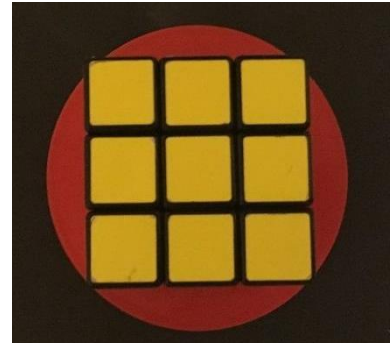
Balance – Asymmetrical

By placing a meridian through this image, more elements are seen on the right side than the left; the green cube is "heavier" than the yellow highlighter and the dice. However, the right side items are "balancing" the
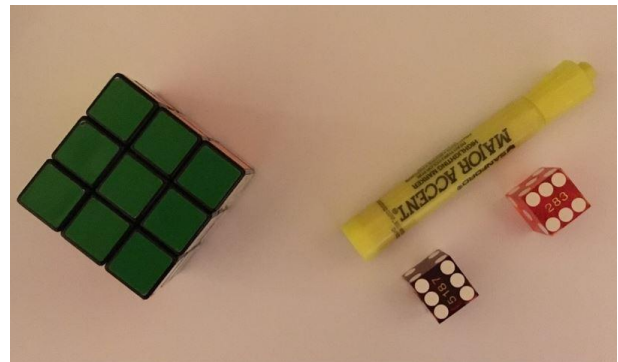
cube on the left because their visual "weight" is roughly equal. The nine smaller green squares that make up the top of the cube also balance the pen and dice. There is a "tension" in the various ways this asymmetrical image maintains a "balance" through various means.

6.   **Contrast** makes elements stand apart from each other. Making an element different from its surroundings is a common technique in visual design. Contrast can also be achieved through difference in color, size, shape, and position (direction).

Contrast - Color

The red paperclip contrasts in color. The surrounding paperclips are all white, adding interest and "stand out" status to the lone the red paperclip. The contrasting
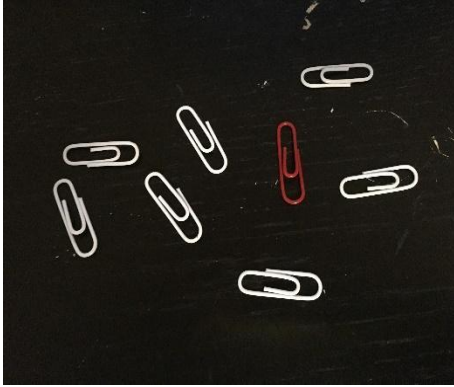
colors invite metaphoric questions, like whether the red paperclip can stand up to the gang of white paperclips.

Contrast – Size

The extra-large stuffed rabbit on the left in the image makes the regular-sized stuffed rabbit to the right seem smaller than it is. There are no other clues in the image as to scale, making the contrast all the more intriguing.

Contrast – Shape

While the objects or elements in this picture are approximately the same size, they differ in shape. The lone rectangle receives more attention because it is so different from the surrounding circles. Here, too, a tension arises

because of the contrast in shape. We are pretty sure the gang of CDs can take the small, rectangular object.

Contrast – Position/ Direction

There are three directions being displayed here: two are horizontal while the remaining direction flows diagonally. From the one direction flowing differently it gains focus, curiosity, and concern for being "at odds" with the horizontal set at the top.

7. **Scale** includes two different variations: exact size or proportional. Scale strategies can result in illusion effects, as exemplified in the image below.

Scale - Proportion

The Ninja Turtle action figure seems to be about the same size as the stuffed bunny rabbit that it appears to be holding over its head. Given the actual size of both elements, this is a "forced perspective," or an illusion of scale proportion.

Scale - Actual

By placing both elements directly next to each other, the correct dimensions can be determined. Clearly, now that

we know the actual scale of the two elements, we also know there's no way that Ninja Turtle action figure could hold the extra-large stuffed rabbit over his head.

8. **Dominance** is a principle that, when applied, can help visual elements to stand out and become the focal point of the image. The more visual "weight" that is added to a specific element, the more dominant it will appear. Weight can be expressed through intense color, unusual size, anything to make the element "dominate" over the other elements in the image.

The lighter becomes the dominant focal point of the image for two reasons: its intense red color suggests dominance. It also appears to tower over the black and white pawns as they are arranged around it. In another sense, the pawns appear subservient to the red lighter in the center.

9. **Similarity** is handled in the first principle's description.

While these nine concepts comprise the federal government's grand view of visual design principles, it is not hard to find a slate of additional concepts that scholars and authors and professional designers have proposed. What is hard is making sense of all of them. I have decided to focus on five more concepts that are either related to, or complementary to the above nine principles. I also believe these next five will be invaluable to know relative to the analysis on Banksy's NOLA Children Series. The five remaining concepts include **layers**, **modularity**, **closure**, **borders**, and **tension**. As with the initial nine principles, each of these remaining five will include a description and an example for ease of comprehension:

10. **Layers** can be achieved through a simple brushstroke on a canvas; they can also be complex, with varying degrees of opaqueness. Because they are not

transparent, layers consume whatever they are covering; they maintain their own identity. By covering, overlapping, or even touching another element, the layer is dominant.

Layers – Top View

Viewing the Rubik's cube from the top, only the top layer can be seen; the layers underneath are not visible. Layers are thick and concrete to the viewer's eye. When layers overlap, only the top layer can be seen.

Layers – Side View

Viewing the same Rubik's cube from a side angle, both the top and facing side can be seen. The other four sides of the cube, however, are not visible.

11. **Modularity** is a special kind of visual constraint; modules are fixed elements used within a larger system or structure (Lupton & Phillips, 2008). While an abundance of elements can overwhelm a viewer, fixed formats can relieve the tension. Modularity allows the designer to focus on specific elements as opposed to too many.

The fix shape of the six-sided dice represents the modularity; there are no other shapes in the image. The dice elements can build and move around and create additional formations, but they are the only element a designer can work with. The shape of the dice restricts the designer to a limited number of options.

12.   **Framing** occurs when a designers uses objects, layers, borders, or various outlines to focus on the image and control how the viewer interprets it. Framing isolates an element out of its surrounding by centering the focus within the frame. Borders separate the image from the background, marking the edges. Borders become the outlining of the frame and can be done by using nearly anything, trees, buildings, cars, infrastructures, poles, and fingers.

Framing

Without the use of fingers and thumbs, there would a much larger view of hats on the wall. By creating this makeshift, man-made box frame, the viewer is *encouraged* to focus primarily within the frame.

Borders

Borders contain the image. Unlike the simple frame above, the door frames serve as a border to signal the important elements in the image. Borders are a type of frame; in this case, the viewer is *forced* to focus on the hats.

13.   **Closure** is the bringing together of elements to create a harmonic view. Images can purposely contain incomplete or distorted elements. An incomplete image denies the viewer closure until the viewer participates in "filling in" what is missing. By bringing elements together, the viewer can arrive at closer with a sense of clarity and relief.
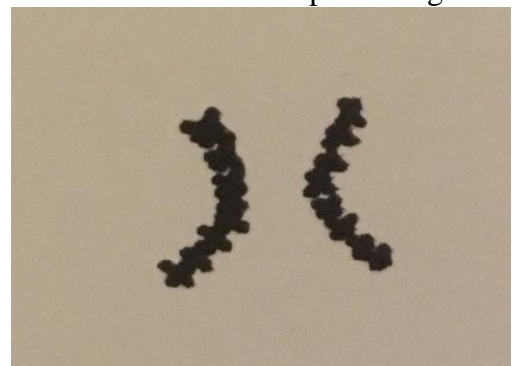
At first glance, this image creates a tension from the lack of clarity. The viewer isn't initially sure what he or she is looking at because missing sections distort the whole view. However, through strategies of similarity, familiarity, hidden lines, and direction, the outline of a baseball comes into view.

14. **Tension** occurs when opposing sided shapes or lines, preferably a point versus a flat edge, are set next to each other. The point directed towards the flatter or rounder shape suggests that it will eventually puncture it. As the point gets closer, the tension rises. Tension is a common visual strategy to create drama.

The sharp point at the end of the hunting knife near the round shape of the bunny creates visual tension. The closer the knife gets to the bunny, the higher the tension. Conversely, the further away the knife gets, the tension is relieved.

No discussion of visual design would be complete without noting Molly Bang's 1991 groundbreaking work, *Picture This: How Pictures Work.* Bang designed her book for a younger audience, but her discoveries changed the way artists, illustrators, visual designers, and others understand how the visual composition of images work to provoke emotions. She also altered our understanding of the narrative capacity in works of art.

She explored how particular shapes, lines, colors, and patterns engage viewers' emotions. Bang is the reason we now realize why we associate horizontal lines with stability. It turns out, as human beings, we are most stable when we are laying down, unable to topple or fall. Conversely, vertical shapes work against gravity; we perceive them to be more exciting because of the potential for movement. Diagonal movement is perceived as either vertical to horizontal or horizontal to vertical. In both cases, there is perceived movement from position to position. Bang also claimed that an image at the center of a canvas will draw the most attention because of how our eyes progress across a canvas. Essentially, we are visually trapped by a centered image. Rounded shapes comfort us because our bodies don't like being pricked, poked or somehow punctured. Less white space enlarges an object; in turn, we feel stronger viewing it compared to an object lost in a lot of white space. Contrasts, too, attract viewers and engage their emotions. Most importantly, Bang argued that powerful emotional responses are more likely with color than with shapes. (Bang, 2010).

Scott McCloud argues that the popularity of the abstract and simplified cartoon style in comics stems in large part from its capacity to encourage reader identification. "We don't just observe the cartoon, we become it" (*Understanding Comics*, p. 36). McCloud also argues that viewers are more inclined to identify closely with illustrations, like Banksy's silhouettes, that are abstract or "cartoony." This becomes an important thing to remember when this analysis turns to looking at the different children he paints.

Having explored the major schools of thought on visual design, including an array of basic elements and corresponding principles, one question remains: **How do visual design strategies work in a selected series of images to evoke a *collective* message?**

Banksy as Rhetor

Banksy is one of today's revolutionary and world renowned street artists. At a young age, the artist experienced a slice of cruel injustice that influences him still:

"When I was nine years old I was expelled from school. It was punishment for swinging one of my classmates round and round before dropping him onto a concrete floor. The unfortunate part is that I never actually touched the kid. I think I was lucky to learn so young that there's no point in behaving yourself. You'll be punished for something you never did anyway" (Banksy, 2005).

Fans of Banksy's work continually comment on how influential his work is and how they enjoy interpreting it. While Banksy's works are groundbreaking and widely recognized, he operates incognito. Multiple reports have attempted to reveal Banksy's identity, but all have turned out to be false. In the documentary film, *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, Banksy is constantly on screen; however, "Mr. Brainwash" (another street artist in the film, often represented simply as "MBW") is instructed to only capture Banksy's backside or hands in the video. At the time, Mr. Brainwash, a vintage clothes store owner with an obsession for video capturing everyday life, began to film his cousin, also known as "Space Invader." This introduced MBW into the Street Art movement and to filming the *Exit* documentary (Banksy, 2010). Most of the video footage capturing Banksy by Mr. Brainwash was in the streets of Los Angeles and at Disneyland in Anaheim (Banksy, 2010). Coach Will Simpson of the Easton Cowboys also shared tales of his interaction with Banksy. The Easton Cowboys is amateur soccer team that established when players decided to join a local league in 1992. In the 1990s, Banksy showed up to practices. Simpson claimed that Banksy "went on tour with us to Mexico

in 2001 and painted a number of murals in the community… He did one tour and shortly

after, he might have moved to London. We see him every so often when he comes back

to Bristol" (Onyanga-Omara, 2012). Those who claim to know Banksy often express a

sense of gratitude while withholding his identity, mentioning only his works and

contributions. Not only is Banksy's concealed identity a feature of his work, it also

prevents law enforcement officials from charging him with violations of graffiti laws.

Banksy himself seems to appreciate the opportunities afforded to someone whose identity

is concealed:

> "If you want to say something and have people listen then you have to
>
> wear a mask. If you want to be honest then you have to live a lie" (Banksy as
>
> quoted in Gupta, N. 2014, par. 2).

Banksy has been contributing masterpieces within restricted areas since he first

started creating graffiti art in the late 1990s. Banksy's early works can be found

alongside Bristol's freehand graffiti artist group called (DBZ) or the DryBreadZ crew.

Viewers can identify these early Banksy contributions by simply locating the well-known

and stylized repertoire of signatures:

Figure 3 Screenshot of Google image search. Retrieved 04.26.17.

Banksy's early work was almost always in the form of graffiti. In the late 1990s,

when Banksy was nearly captured and arrested, he started to adopt faster, less

cumbersome techniques:

> "As I lay there listening to the cops on the tracks I realized I had to cut my
> painting time in half or give it up altogether. I was staring straight up at the
> stenciled plate on the bottom of a fuel tank when I realized I could just copy that
> style and make each letter three feet high (Banksy, 2005).

Banksy took off with the new stenciling tactic and began to save a considerable

amount of time. He was also able to create works in more dangerous and heavily guarded

locations. Banksy's work often contains images with text; however, some works are just

images, some simply text. Most of the text-only works are slogans or sayings.

Banksy's works have indicated various political and social themes, including anti-

war, anti-consumerism, anti-fascism, anti-imperialism, anti-authoritarianism, anarchism,

nihilism, and existentialism ("Banksy", n.d.). Additionally, the components of the human

condition that Banksy's works commonly critique are greed, poverty, hypocrisy,

boredom, despair, absurdity, and alienation ("Banksy", n.d.). Banksy was able to spread

into further locations beyond Bristol; now his works can be seen in various cities and

countries, including Los Angeles CA, New York NY, London, Norfolk, San Francisco

CA, Berlin, Brighton, Bristol, Liverpool, Detroit MI, Birmingham AL, Boston MA, New

Orleans LA, Disneyland CA, South Bank London, Central Park NY, Regent's Canal

London, Palestine, Jerusalem, Mexico, Cheddar Gorge Somerset, Timbuktu Mali,

Ontario, Melbourne, Toronto, Brooklyn NY, Cheltenham, Bethlehem, Park City UT,

Yankee Stadium NY, Italy, Southampton, Salt Lake City UT, Hastings, Hollywood,

Chicago, Shoreditch, Glastonbury, and Bethlehem.

Banksy learned to complete the works by using the strategies known as "guerilla art tactics." He is known to go to great lengths to capture the public's attention. When viewers of graffiti see his works on bridges or on the very top of buildings, the question "How did they do that?" always accompanies admiration for the work. From careful viewing of the 2010 documentary, *Exit*, audiences have noted the strategic use of ladders, scaffolding, climbing up through fire escapes, getting on top of cars, doing parkour, and even sometimes climbing on top of each other as means for getting into tricky locations Not all of Banksy's works were able to be pulled off alone; at times, there were others who helped. There would need to be lookouts as well, as not all places were free to wonder about. For Banksy, as with other graffiti artists, this isn't just a hobby. (Banksy, 2010). If caught in the act, artists can be charged with serious crimes and given stiff penalties. Banksy noted the need for and artistic benefits of using extreme caution, even paranoia, when trying work without being caught:

> "Your mind is working at its best when you're being paranoid. You explore every avenue and possibility of your situation at high speed with total clarity" (Banksy as quoted in *Quotes*).

Banksy's incognito status lends to his ethos, specifically because his motives for displaying his art cannot be tied to monetary gain. He has never accepted a bid. In fact, all the bids placed on his works of art have been accepted by third-party thieves who have regularly stolen either parts off the work, or entire works. It is not uncommon to hear of unauthorized door and wall removals boasting a work by Banksy. Some communities have placed Plexiglas over Banksy art to help preserve it from vandalism and theft.

Those of his critics that charge him with being a "sell out" neglect to note that, for all

auctions of those of Banksy's works in which he had a legal claim, the proceeds were

given to charities. It does not appear, ideologically or practically, that Banksy is much

motivated by personal financial gain.

Banksy's work is unique in many ways, including the emotionally stirring

ideological themes of his work and where he chooses to place them. With each new

installation, and after decades of artistic evolution and unresolved mystery, Banksy

continues to gain in critical acclaim. His work does appear in galleries and privately

owned collections. However, his more recent work seems to suddenly appear in the most

secure and heavily guarded locations. Banksy has multiple artworks on the West Bank

barrier wall, along within the ruins of Palestine. Most of these works narrate Palestinian

suffering as their territory deteriorates due to multiple bombing campaigns. The artist has

developed a reputation for installing his artwork in areas of profound human catastrophe

and crisis.

During the 2001 Easton Cowboys soccer season, Banksy joined the team as a

goalie and managed to do a series of murals in Mexico. One of the murals is headlined by

"Resistencia," the Spanish word for "resistance." Banksy's murals highlighted the human

rights struggle by indigenous people in the country and advocated for their independence

from the Mexican government (Hills, 2012). One mural included pictures of people in

conflict with bribe-accepting soldiers. A Banksy collection published in the same year of

the Mexico murals and titled, *Banging Your Head Against a Brick Wall*, recalls the

artist's advocacy for oppressed people and against tyrannical regimes that contain their

people within walls: "A wall is a very big weapon. It's one of the nastiest things you can

hit someone with" (Banksy, 2001).

Why is Banksy creating this propaganda around the globe? His work includes clues that help to answer that question, including the addition of slogans and quotes left to be read. However, there is one quote that gets at the larger motive for this artist's activity: "There's nothing more dangerous than someone who wants to make the world a better place" (Banksy, 2001).

Post-Katrina New Orleans is one of the areas that attracted a Banksy installation of 14 separate works in 2008. Of the 14 paintings, eight are of children, a common Banksy theme. While the understanding that his overall goal is to "make the world a better place," his specific motivation for creating a particular series is not readily apparent. The NOLA Children Series is one in which the particular "dramas" enacted in each of the paintings raises questions about Banksy's rhetorical motives. The results and discussion chapter in this study will be devoted to answering this question: **"What can rhetorical theory and visual design teach us about Banksy's rhetorical motives for creating the NOLA children series?"**

METHODOLOGY

The questions proposed in the literature review include the following: (1) How are the principles of rhetoric implemented through visual design? (2) How do visual design strategies work in a selected series of images to evoke a collective message? And (3) "What can rhetorical theory and visual design teach us about Banksy's rhetorical motives for creating the NOLA children series?"

In order to answer these questions, Close Textual Analysis (CTA) and Kenneth Burke's Dramatism are the most promising methods. This chapter will cite the merits of each method and identify their relative capacity to answer the questions that drive this research. Additionally, this chapter will describe how the data will be analyzed once it is gathered.

Close Textual Analysis

According to the editor of the 4th Edition of *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism* (2010*),* CTA is a method that "studies the relationship between the inner workings of public discourse and its historical context in order to discover what makes a particular text function persuasively (Burgchardt, p. 199). Burgchardt is primarily referring to written "texts," though visual artifacts are also covered in this anthology of critical works. He goes on to say that CTA "aims to reveal and explicate the precise, often hidden, mechanisms that give a particular text artistic unity and rhetorical effect" (p. 199). Through a close "reading" of the text, critics can discover both intrinsic and extrinsic meaning (much like Barthes' denotative and connotative structure). This method can reveal rhetorical efforts to appeal to the intended audience, identify patterns and themes and rhetorical devices used to persuade, and expose the artifact's underlying

structure and aesthetics. Even when focusing on a single symbol or icon, critics employing CTA will work to connect the individual instance to the whole artifact.

When applying CTA to visual rhetoric, appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos are understood as "seeable" elements within the artifact. Arguments are visual, so a "close reading" of the visual text requires an understanding of how arguments are represented visually, as covered in the Literature Review.

The use of the CTA method requires that each of the 8 works within the NOLA Children series are carefully deconstructed for the visual design and visual rhetorical elements and strategies inherent within each part of the series. The philosophy underlying CTA presumes that time and exposure to the artifact will reveal the patterns and themes that serve as warrants to the arguments, components of persuasion. CTA will make it possible to answer the first two research questions, namely "How are the principles of rhetoric implemented through visual design?" and "How do visual design strategies work in a selected series of images to evoke a collective message?" In order to answer the third research question about the artist's *motives*, "What can rhetorical theory and visual design teach us about Banksy's motives for creating the NOLA children series?" a second method will be used.

Dramatism

Dramatism is Kenneth Burke's critical system for analyzing human symbolic interaction (Burgchardt, 237).   While traditional criticism seeks to understand how persuasive techniques function to bring out specific results, Dramatism is more concerned with philosophical, psychological, and sociological questions, like the rhetor's motive for constructing the "drama" he or she created (Burgchardt, 237). Unlike other

rhetorical-critical methods, Dramatism determines the motivation for creating the particular drama enacted in the speech or painting. Why did Banksy create the NOLA Children series? Given that each painting can be understood as a single act in a drama, what are Banksy's motives for choosing one particular drama to persuade, as opposed to the many other dramas he could have chosen? These are the big, unanswered questions that drive most of Banksy's critics today.

Dramatism includes Burke's emphasis on psychoanalysis, his use of criticism to bring about social change, the pentad, and his concept of tragic and comic frames (Burgchardt, 237). This research will focus specifically on the Pentad and its five elements: "act," "agent," "scene," "agency," and "purpose." In order to identify which element of the painting is fulfilling which part of the Pentad, it is necessary to first identify the Most Dominant and Second Most Dominant parts of each drama. Burke calls this the "ratio," and it is usually rendered as Most Dominant: Second Most Dominant. Once these two most dominant parts of the Pentad are identified and structured as a ratio, the other parts of the Pentad are more obvious to locate. Burgchardt reminds us that "these components will be manifested in rhetoric and can be used to reveal the possible motives of speakers (Burgchardt, 237). In other words, once we understand the ratio of the most dominant feature of the Pentad to the second most dominant, and once we "flesh out" the rest of the Pentad, we can begin to answer questions about the rhetor's motives for creating this particular drama.

In *A Pentadic Analysis of Senator Edward Kennedy's Address to the People of Massachusetts, July 25, 1969,* author David A. Ling recalls Burke's claim that "as man sees these similar situations (or dramas) occurring, he develops strategies to explain what

is happening (Ling, 327). Burke argues that whenever a man describes a situation he provides answers to five questions related to the drama: "What was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose) (Ling, 328)." A second conclusion that results from this analysis is that man's description of a situation reveals what he regards as the appropriate response to various human situations (Ling, 328).

If we understand persuasion as the attempt by one person to get others to accept one view of reality as the correct one, then the Pentad can be used to examine why the rhetor or persuader chose a particular drama to achieve the restructuring of the audience's view of reality (Ling, 328). If Banksy, through the NOLA Children Series, is able to persuade the audience in a way that is aligned to his intended message, then his rhetorical appeals were successful. But, this research does not concern itself with the effects on the audience. Instead, this research is designed to use CTA to explore the visual design elements and the visual rhetorical strategies to help structure a Pentadic argument for each painting and determine Banksy's motives for painting the children as he did.

In the "Results" section of the next chapter, first the CTA for each painting will be detailed, informed by the review of the literature. Then, the eight paintings of the NOLA Children Series will be subjected to Pentadic analysis. In the "Discussion" section of the next chapter, the results of each will be synthesized to discuss the series as a whole in light of what is discovered by this combined method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Because location of the artwork is an important feature of its context, below is a map adapted from a Flicker site map (See http://www.flickr.com/groups/banksydoes neworleans) to identify where, relative to each other and in the city itself, Banksy installed his NOLA Children Series. Many of the paintings have since been removed (painted over, vandalized, stolen, etc.)
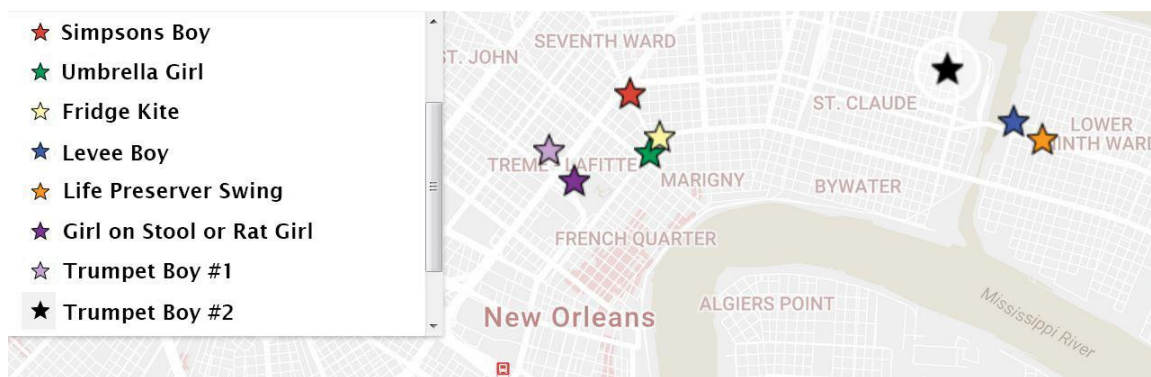
Results of Close Textual Analysis

Close textual analysis will follow the order listed on the map above, beginning with (1) Simpsons Boy, (2) Umbrella Girl, (3) Flying Fridge, (4) Umbrella Blown Away--often referred to as "Levee Boy" because of his location on the levee wall, (5) Life Saver Swing, (6) Girl on Stool with Mouse, (7) Boy with Trumpet 1, and (8) Boy with Trumpet 2. There is no available order based on when the paintings were first done, so we will go with the order provided by the adapted Flicker map (above).

Each painting will undergo a close reading, starting with a description of the work, to identify the visual design components and the visual rhetorical strategies at work. From this initial analysis, each painting will be outlined in a "Pentad Sketch" to

suggest the Most Dominant, Second Most Dominant, and subsequent features of the Dramatistic Pentad.

1. **Simpsons Boy**

Simpsons Boy is placed on the side of a building on St. Bernard at N. Robertson St. in New Orleans, Louisiana. The background wall behind the image is brick layer-painted a haze blue. The image is painted using wheatpaste poster and is life scale. The image depicts a replica from "The Simpsons" introduction skit of Bart Simpson writing on the chalkboard as a punishment for some outlandish behavior. The boy is blond-haired and light skinned, wearing blue shoes, blue shorts, and a bright red shirt, just like the animated character Bart Simpson. The young boy is writing the sentence, "I must not copy what I see on the Simpsons." The sentence in the image is repeated six times; the boy is finishing up the word "Simpsons" in a seventh line. The chalk that the boy is writing with is white on a black chalkboard. The boy is writing in an informal cursive font, suggesting that the boy is at least in 3rd grade, when many public schools introduce cursive writing. Interestingly, most images of Bart writing on the chalkboard do not use a cursive font. Instead, he relies on all-caps printing or basic printing as in the picture

below:

The NOLA Simpsons boy, like Bart, is writing left-handed, left to right. There is also a green skateboard to the right of the boy with a yellow stripe running down the middle of the board. Bart's skateboard is often featured as green with a red stripe.

Visual Design elements: Simpsons Boy

The visual design elements in Simpsons Boy include texture, intensity, unity, hierarchy, balance, contrast, scale, dominance, layers, framing, and border.

In order for the boy to seem as if he is standing on the ground, the painting must have been adjusted slightly upward. This painting uses a wheatpaste poster layer on an actual rough **texture** haze blue painted brick on a side wall of a building. The image also consists of **layers***;* the boy is overlapping the chalkboard. The **scale** of all the elements within the image are life sized, and the image is literal (meaning there is no exaggeration of scale). The image contains **unity***,* all of the elements related to the boy are the same as those belonging to Bart Simpson, including the action of writing on the chalkboard. The **hierarchy** in this image flows from left to right, focusing viewers to the writing of the chalk. What the boy is writing, "I must not copy what I see on the Simpsons," demands viewer focus, primarily because our first viewing target is the boy himself. Then, we

follow his direction for what to look at. In this case, he is focusing on the chalkboard

writing he is doing. The **balance** in this image is asymmetrical; the boy and skateboard

are counterweighting the extra weight of the chalkboard. The **intensity** of the colors from

the image, versus the low hue and soft tone of the color from the paint of the wall behind

it, creates a **contrast**. The contrast also focuses attention to the image of the boy writing

on the chalkboard. The bright colors also bring viewer attention to the boy, then flows to

the white writing of the chalk, suggesting **dominance** is assigned to the boy and what he

is doing. By placing at least one side of the image near the ending of wall, Banksy

frames his image and creates the illusion of being inside a classroom. The tan colored

brick to the right distinguishes another **border**.

Visual Rhetorical devices: Simpsons Boy

The visual rhetorical devices in Simpson's Boy include metaphor, evidence,

narrative, and irony.

The Simpson boy is illustrated as a young boy copying Bart Simpson, a cartoon

sitcom deeply ingrained into American popular culture since the animated series first

aired in 1989. **Irony** is a primary rhetorical strategy at work in this painting. The viewer

recognizes that an unseen disciplinarian has instructed the boy to stop copying Bart.

However, the very act of writing "I must not copy what I see on the Simpsons" on the

chalkboard undermines the punishment designed to stop it. Irony highlights the ignorance

of the unseen authority, (who we know exists because the boy is being punished by

someone, an example of an incomplete **argument** viewers must "fill in"). The unseen

authority is ignorant about the well-known and popular animated series and its main

character's behaviors. The Simpsons boy seems to be all too eager to fulfill his

punishment; this is where the **narrative** closes and the "joke" or irony of the situation is revealed. **Metaphor** is used to compare this Simpsons boy to Bart. They are two different characters, but the metaphor highlights their similarities and obscures their differences. Additionally, the unseen authority figure who dished out this punishment can be compared to all unseen authorities who gave incomplete or inaccurate instructions, like telling people to board up their homes in a hurricane without elevating the threat of flooding. Missing authorities is a common theme in Banksy's paintings of children. **Synecdoche**, or the creation of a whole-to-part/part-to-whole metonymy, can be found in the "parts," like writing on the chalkboard, to suggest the "whole" of punishment. Bart-like shoes, clothes, and a skateboard are also "parts" that represent the "whole" of Bart-like behaviors.

Pentad Sketch: Simpsons Boy

Given what we now know about the visual and rhetorical details of the art, the research then turns to answer the question about Banksy's motivation for constructing this particular drama by constructing the Pentad and aligning the 5 parts to specific elements of the painting. First, though, it is critical to identify the Most Dominant Part of this drama and construct it as a ratio to the Second Most Dominant part. For the Simpsons Boy, the Act of the boy writing on the chalkboard about what he has done appears most dominant (as supported by the dominance elements identified from Visual Design). The Purpose, to comply with punishment, appears to be the second most dominant feature of the Pentad (as supported by the visual rhetorical features of irony and synecdoche). The rest of the Pentad can now be sorted out:

Scene	Young boy dressed like Bart Simpson writing repeated sentence on chalkboard, Bart-like skateboard propped up on the wall.
Act	Writing "I must not copy what I see on the Simpsons" on the chalkboard.
Agent	Boy
Agency	Chalk, Cursive Handwriting
Purpose	To comply with punishment.

NOTE: because these are paintings, they are like freeze-frames of an entire dramatic act, a singular depiction of a larger narrative that is unseen. This means that the Pentad for visual works will have some redundancy, such that the act is often depicted in close alignment with the particular scene. The ratio is chosen, not from the dominance of certain words or themes in a larger, text-based narrative, but from the dominant part of the drama as it appears to viewers (and corresponding with visual design elements and visual rhetorical strategies.) In this case, the Most Dominant part of the Dramatistic Pentad appears to be the Act of writing on the chalkboard, especially as all other elements of the drama support that act. The second most dominant part of the Pentad would then be Purpose, as complying with punishment explains why the act is occurring in the first place and offers supporting clues for why the act became necessary.

This ratio, **Act: Purpose**, also suggests a motive for Banksy's construction of this particular drama. **The proposed motive for this drama is to emphasize the irony of complying with punishment that actually undermines the authority behind the punishment.** The boy is being asked to do something (write on the chalkboard) in the

same, ineffective manner that Bart Simpson is forced to comply with punishment. The

boy becomes more like Bart, not less, because the selected punishment is uninformed by

the details of "acting like Bart Simpson." This drama is about the ignorance of authority

and the drive of innocent children to model television characters they idolize. Children

will do as they are told, even when their punishment reinforces their desire to model the

behavior of TV characters. Bart Simpson has the last laugh under Banksy's depiction.

2. Umbrella Girl

Umbrella Girl is a wheatpaste poster installed on a white painted brick corner of a

building on the corner street of St. Claude Avenue and Kerlec St., in the Maringy

District. The composition includes a young girl holding an umbrella with rain pouring

from inside it. The young girl and umbrella are painted from wheat paste. The rain is

painted by dripping silver spray paint. The rainfall is soaking the young girl, but the

source of the rainfall is unexpectedly coming from within the umbrella. In a normal

circumstance, the rain should be falling outside the umbrella and ricocheting off it. The

young girl and umbrella are both life-scale. The young girl is wearing what would appear

to be a typical play dress from the 1950s. The young girl's facial expression indicates confusion as the rainfall soaks her while standing under the umbrella. In an attempt to investigate why it appears the umbrella isn't working to protect her from the rain, and instead of inspecting the umbrella directly, the young girl extends her right arm and finger tips outside the umbrella. She discovers there is no rain. The umbrella, an instrument to protect her from rain, is actually "the problem." Upon second glance at what first seemed to be confused facial expression, the viewer notices the moment of discovery, when the young girl learns the source of "the problem."

Visual Design elements: Umbrella Girl

The visual design elements in Umbrella Girl include texture, intensity, unity, space, white space, hierarchy, balance, contrast, scale, dominance, layers, framing, and borders.

The Umbrella Girl is primarily a black and white image. This **contrast** serves to highlight certain areas in the image. The girl's dress is black. The underside of the umbrella appears much darker than the top of the umbrella; there even appear to be dark clouds on the underside of the umbrella. These darker areas contrast with and lead the eye to the bright white of the top of the umbrella and the young girl's white dress collar and face. This suggests the **dominance** of the girl's face and the umbrella. As viewers of this painting, we follow the girl's eyes to where the suspicious activity is occurring: under the umbrella. Her right hand, reaching out of the umbrella, is **diagonally** and **directionally** opposed to the direction of her gaze, suggesting her expression of confusion while gazing at the underside of the umbrella is connected to what she is discerning from her outstretched hand. In other words, she suspects the underside of the umbrella is the

problem, and her tactile senses confirm that suspicion. The rain falling onto the young

girl is done in silver spray paint; while this is not an intense **color**, it creates a

shimmering effect to lend realism to the rain. The elements in the image that suggest

unity include the umbrella, the rainfall, and the girl's soaked hair; all are "expected"

components of a heavy rain. Creating an imaginary line down the middle of the image,

the image has a symmetrical **balance**. The girl's outstretched right hand is also balanced

by the left-leaning umbrella. The entire image is in life **scale**, and yet it should be noted

that the umbrella seems adult-sized, in part because of how the young girl is grasping

above the handle. The painting consists of **layers** in that the shaft of the umbrella

overlaps the girl and her hand overlaps the umbrella's shaft above the handle. Some of

the rainfall overlaps the girl, layering the two paint media. The entire image itself is a

layer on the hard white painted cinder brick wall; the wall has its own rough and solid

texture. The **texture** of the rain and the girl's clothing and skin contrast with the brick

texture. There is a large amount of **negative or white space** above the girl, reinforcing

the perception that she is a young child. The brick wall creates **borders** that frame the

image. The white space and **framing** suggest a hierarchy to the image, flowing from top

to bottom and lending importance to the umbrella. The bottom of the image, below the

hemline of the girl's dress, actually loses detail and dissolve into blackness, almost a

silhouette, suggesting her legs and footwear are not important features of the image.

Visual Rhetorical devices: Umbrella Girl

The visual rhetorical devices in Umbrella Girl include metaphor, evidence, narrative,

metonymy (synecdoche), and irony.

The adult size of the umbrella that the young girl is holding, along with the

unexpected nature of its "problem," suggests that this is not the young girl's umbrella. These two points are "**narrative evidence**" to suggest the umbrella was given to her by an adult to use in the rain; the girl would not be expressing confusion if an umbrella she was familiar with began performing in this unexpected way. The girl's facial expression suggests that she is aware the umbrella is the problem, perhaps as a consequence of reaching out from under it to find no rain. There is **irony** in the umbrella's problem that suggests the entire scene is also metaphoric. An umbrella, meant to protect from rain, is actually raining on the child. **Metaphorically** speaking, this suggests a comparison to the levee walls around New Orleans. Like the umbrella, the levees are designed to protect people from water. And yet, both the umbrella this girl is using and the levees around New Orleans, have an ironic—and in the case of the levees, fatal—flaw. Though they were built to protect the city's residents from flooding, their known flaws actually caused the flooding that led to the large loss of life after Hurricane Katrina made landfall. This young girl is also capable of agency and discovery. It does not appear to take her long to reach her hand out and gather the **evidence** for herself. The image sets up a syllogistic **argument**, the main premise of which would be the following: If a child is offered something to protect her, and that protection ends up causing the very harm it was meant to prevent, the child has been betrayed.

Pentad Sketch: Umbrella Girl

Again, before the Pentad can be fully constructed, the Most Dominant and Second Most Dominant parts of the Pentad must be identified for this image. Using the visual design clues of hierarchy and contrast, combined with the visual rhetorical clues of irony and metaphor, The **Purpose**, to verify that the umbrella is the source of the problem,

appears to be the most dominant feature of the Pentad. The girl's **Agency**, using her own senses to affirm her suspicion that something is wrong with the umbrella, appears second most dominant. The girl's realization that rain is falling from within a "borrowed" umbrella leads to the discovery that she has been betrayed. The rest of the Pentad can now be sorted out:

Scene	A little girl standing, holding an umbrella that is raining on her from within.
Act	Reaching up out of umbrella and feeling no rain.
Agent	Young girl.
Agency	The girl's own tactile senses affirming her suspicion that something is wrong.
Purpose	To verify that the umbrella is the source of the problem.

This ratio, **Purpose: Agency**, also suggests a motive behind Banksy's construction of this particular drama. **Namely, an innocent child has enough sense, both common and tactile, to verify her suspicions and locate the source of a problem she encounters; she knows when she has been betrayed**. She is young, but she is old enough to figure out that she was provided (by an adult or authority of some kind) with an umbrella that fails to protect her and ultimately causes the very problem it was meant to prevent. If an innocent child is able to make this discovery, then obviously those in authority have betrayed her trust through incompetence at best, malice at worst.

3. Fridge Kite

Fridge kite is a stencil of a hard silhouette boy flying a wheatpaste poster refrigerator as a kite. The images are life scale and proportional. The placing of "Fridge Kite" is on the side of a building near St. Claude Ave at St. Anthony St. in New Orleans, Louisiana. The wall is brick and layer-painted white. The hard silhouette of the boy is done by stencil and colored in with black spray paint. The outline of the boy consists of hard, sharp lines and solid curves. The boy is wearing a tee shirt and shorts; his footwear is not visible. The boy is standing up with both of his arms extended out to the right in the position of flying a kite. The string grasped by the boy's hands is taught and connected to the lower refrigerator door handle in a straight, diagonal black line. The string line and the "kite" tail appear to be painted directly using either spray paint or a paint marker. The refrigerator to the top right appears to be a standard household refrigerator and is, unexpectedly, floating as if as weightless as a paper kite. The front of the refrigerator is a light tan color that contrasts against the black shadowing of the underneath and side of the appliance. The tail of the kite is curved like an upside-down capital letter "S." The eight bow-tie ribbons on the tail are equally spaced and all in black.

<u>Visual Design elements: Fridge Kite</u>

The visual design elements in Fridge Kite include line, texture, volume, direction, space, hierarchy, balance, contrast, scale, dominance, layers, modularity, framing, and borders.

The actual rough **texture** of the white painted brick wall is a perfect canvas. The endings of the brick wall create **borders** that **frame** and brings focus to the silhouette boy and fridge. The **balance** of the image is created by the counterweight of the silhouette boy and the flying fridge. The negative **space** around the image is even, as the image of the silhouette boy and fridge occupy roughly the same amount of space. The string holding the fridge to the silhouette boy is a **line** that creates **direction,** bringing the attention of the viewer from the silhouette boy to the fridge. The shadow of the fridge illustrates the **volume** of the refrigerator. The **scale** on both the silhouette boy and fridge are both real-life size. The spray painting of the hard silhouette and the wheatpaste poster of the refrigerator are a **layer** on the white painted brick wall. The black spray painting hard silhouette and the dark shading against the white wall creates a **contrast** to focus on the silhouette boy and fridge. The **hierarchy** flows top to bottom, bringing attention to the refrigerator. The artist was given a creative blank canvas and used it appropriately to create directional flow from the silhouette boy to the refrigerator giving the latter hierarchy and **dominance**.

<u>Visual Rhetorical devices: Fridge Kite</u>

The visual rhetorical devices in Fridge Kite include synecdoche, irony, presence or identification, and narrative.

This image is simpler in form and content than any of the others involving color.

Even the color of the refrigerator seems muted, almost an industrial tan. This is also the

only image that combines both a child in silhouette and a three dimensional object (the

refrigerator). The image has a triangular feel to it, with the boy at the lower right corner,

the string line leading upward, the refrigerator at the apex, and the tail trailing off in the

curved form. The refrigerator kite is not a literal image, suggesting this is either a

metaphor or some other figurative image. Refrigerators have special significance for the

survivors of Hurricane Katrina. In fact, there is such a thing as "Katrina refrigerators."

Once they evacuated New Orleans, many of the residents could not come back to their

homes for more than a month after the disaster. Upon arrival, even residents whose

homes were not damaged by the flood discovered their turned-off refrigerators were filled

with badly decomposing food. Wikipedia claims that the food rotting in the refrigerators

"was so toxic that it melted plastic, corroded metal, and dissolved rubber refrigerator

liners," but the citation is not verified (*Wikipedia:* Katrina Refrigerator). We do know

that it took a long time for waste disposal to be restored to the city. Refrigerators were

regarded as so contaminated that a special day was designated for putting refrigerators

out on the street for garbage pick-up. The waste disposal crews had to be trained in the

handling of hazardous materials and wearing hazmat suits on the refrigerator day. The

less hazardous refrigerators became yard art, some even decorated for Halloween at the

end of October and Christmas in December. Some were spray painted with slogans and

quotes like, "Heck of a job, Brownie!" (A reference to President George W. Bush's

exclamation about what he thought was a good job by the head of FEMA, Michael

Brown). Other refrigerators simply lined the streets of New Orleans for months, waiting

for pick-up. The scale of city-wide refrigerator disposal was so big that children's play

areas were certainly impacted.

That Banksy chose a refrigerator for his "kite" would resonate with New Orleans residents especially; rhetorically, this seems to be an example of **presence** or **identification** with the intended audience. The image is also a **synecdoche**, a unique and significantly representative image that recalls the entire post-Katrina aftermath. Even so, the refrigerator is an unlikely **metaphor** for a kite, causing even those viewers who know about "Katrina Refrigerators" to puzzle at the image. In many ways, the refrigerator image suggests something heavy, not kite-like in any conceivable fashion. Perhaps, like Umbrella Girl, the image provokes the perception of a larger **narrative** about how something meant to protect food became a toxic hazard, too dangerous to touch, let alone protect food inside…or serve as a child's play thing. The unusual image recalls the phrase, "Go Fly a Kite!" Unable to find safe places to play or any kites to fly, the child enacts the ironic alternative by picking something rendered so useless and dangerous by the disaster. The kite's carefree tail underscores the **irony**.

Pentad Sketch: Fridge Kite

The Most Dominant part of image would have to be the refrigerator kite. It captures and sustains our attention because of its unexpected placement in the air. The second most dominant part of the image would seem to be the silhouetted boy. And yet, the boy cannot be the agent in this Pentad, as his hold of the thin string looks almost incidental. In a kite-flyer to kite relationship, it is the kite that weaves and bobs in the air, weighted by its tail and free to catch whatever breeze comes along. In a strong wind, the normal kite might pull away from its flyer. The thin string between the boy and the refrigerator kite offers no remedy should this kite suddenly bolt or nose dive to the earth.

Everything about this image is wrong, dangerous, even absurd. And once we realize that,

we can construct the Pentad. The refrigerator kite is the **agent**, and the boy is merely part

of the **scene**.

Scene	A tan refrigerator is aloft, facing the light, with the tail and bearing of a kite. A silhouetted boy holds on to the kite string.
Act	An airborne refrigerator.
Agent	Refrigerator
Agency	Absurdity, Hyperbole, Emptiness and Uselessness.
Purpose	To highlight the Katrina Refrigerator taking on a life of its own.

This ratio, **Agent: Scene**, suggests that **Banksy's motive for constructing this

drama was to confuse the outsider and resonate with the insider**. Like with the

umbrella in Umbrella Girl, the refrigerator is more than useless. It is the source of the

problem. Children could not find spaces to play when toxic refrigerators lined every

street for months. This image suggests that post-Katrina children were left to their own

devices, perhaps so traumatized that their play became an absurd, senseless activity

surrounded by the stench of decay and even death. Katrina Refrigerators received more

attention across the globe than the children left to rediscover play in the aftermath.

4. Levee Boy

Otherwise known as the "Levee Boy Losing Umbrella," this image is on the Industrial Canal Flood Wall near the corner of Jourdan Avenue at N. Derbigny St. of the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans, Louisiana. The image is a hard silhouette of a young boy reaching for his hard silhouette of an umbrella. Both elements of the image, the young boy and the umbrella, are life-scale. The Industrial Canal Flood Wall is made of cement and the coloring is haze grey. There are no other images on the wall. The images of the hard silhouettes are done by utilizing a stencil and colored in with black spray paint. The image is labeled a hard silhouette for the solid coloring along with fine cuts outlining the young boy and the umbrella. The young boy is wearing a shirt and shorts; however, the shorts cannot be seen when the levee fills with water. The umbrella has a j-shaped handle and appears to be adult-sized. It has an iconic shape, suggesting something vintage or nostalgic about it (not unlike the one in Umbrella Girl). There is too much space between the boy and the umbrella, so much so that the viewer knows he will never get it back. The positioning of the umbrella is up in the air and not tumbling on the ground. It would take a very strong wind, hurricane strength, to keep the umbrella up in the air while also carrying it away from the boy.

Visual Design elements: Levee Boy

The visual design elements in Levee Boy include line, texture, direction, space, white space, hierarchy, balance, contrast, scale, dominance, layers, framing, borders, and closure.

The image of the boy and umbrella are both silhouettes in solid black creating a **contrast** between the images and the lighter levee wall. This contrast signals **dominance** by pinning the focus to the silhouetted boy reaching for his umbrella along this never-ending cement wall. The J-hook of the umbrella handle and the outstretched hand of the boy are at near identical angles, as if the umbrella was swiftly carried upward after tugging the boy's arm until he couldn't hold on any longer. The angles suggest a **diagonal** line between them, offering **closure** by occupying the negative space between them. The **balance** illustrated is asymmetrical with the silhouetted boy's **weight** is offset by the counter weight of the silhouetted umbrella. The **scale** of both the silhouette boy and silhouette umbrella are life size. This image does contain a simple **layer** of the silhouettes on the levee wall. The levee wall has the smooth, raw **texture** of unfinished concrete. The **hierarchy** of the image flows left to right and top to bottom. There is a crack within the wall behind the boy, creating a slight **border** on the right-hand side. The left border is endless, allowing the umbrella to be carried away indefinitely. The cement wall around the image creates a **frame** to focus viewers on the silhouettes. There were multiple places on the levee that Banksy could have chosen for this image; his use of the crack behind the boy adds weight to the image and demonstrates the artist's attention to the entire composition.

<u>Visual Rhetorical devices: Levee Boy</u>

The visual rhetorical devices in Levee Boy include metaphor, synecdoche, space, narrative, **presence** and irony.

Once again, an umbrella features as both a **metaphor** and an item that is unlikely to bring the child relief from whatever it is that threatens him. When the levee is without water, the child is caught in a strong wind that wrenches his umbrella from him. The umbrella would be useless protection in a strong wind anyway. But, when the levee fills with water, this image is haunting for its senselessness. A boy is desperately reaching for the umbrella as if it were a life saver. **Ironically**, he is so focused on the umbrella that he doesn't not even seem to notice the water rising to his waste. The **space** between the boy and the umbrella underscore the futility of his effort to recapture it. As it turns out, this particular levee wall is one of the fifty that were breached the night Katrina made landfall. The levee portion becomes a **synecdoche** to represent the entire levee system. And, the single scene suggests a larger **narrative** about children being inadequately protected from the real dangers they face. Finally, this image is an example of **presence** because it was painted on the Jourdan Industrial Canal Flood Wall, one of the fifty that failed and caused the flooding of New Orleans.

<u>Pentad Sketch: Levee Boy</u>

The visual design elements, in combination with the visual rhetoric strategies suggest that the Most Dominant part of this drama's Pentad is the **scene**. As with all of Banksy's silhouetted images of children in New Orleans, the boy is merely part of the scene. The Second Most Dominant part of this Pentad is the **purpose** for the drama itself: to draw attention to the scene. This is literally the "scene of the crime," the leading cause

of death and destruction after Hurricane Katrina made landfall. But, after the waters receded, everyone talked about Katrina as if it were the primary disaster. The long-expected failures of the levee were buried in the news reports and the political discourse that followed. The rest of the Pentad can now be sorted out:

Scene	Hard silhouette of boy on the levee reaching for an umbrella that has escaped his grasp as is carried away by a strong wind.
Act	Focusing on the dangerous levee.
Agent	Missing authority.
Agency	Missing attentiveness.
Purpose	Draw authority's attention to the levee.

This ratio, **Scene: Purpose**, also suggests a motive for Banksy's construction of this particular drama. **The proposed motive for this drama is to force the authorities' continued vigilance and attention to the newly built Jourdan Industrial Levee Wall.** This particular image is unique in that it takes on more significance when the waters begin to rise in the levee. For decades, authorities were aware that a direct hit on New Orleans by a Category 3 or higher hurricane would result in catastrophic collapse of the levee system. The Army Corps of Engineers had conducted multiple studies in their efforts to secure funding for levee reconstruction, but they were largely ignored. Banksy seems to have painted this image to return the world's focus on the real cause of the human disaster that was the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. And, he seems to suggest that the efforts to rebuild the levees after Katrina have been inadequate—not high enough, not strong enough—for the kinds of storms New Orleans will surely endure in the future.

5. Life Preserver Swing

Banksy placed Boy on Life Preserver Swing on the side of a light turquoise painted cinder brick wall on the corner on Reynolds St. and North Claiborne Ave. in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, Louisiana. This image is a wheatpaste poster displaying a young boy swinging on a life preserver; it is life-sized in scale. The light brown rope is hanging from the side molding near the roof and attached to the life preserver by a simple slipknot. The young boy is standing up right with his feet on the life preserver much like he would with a tire swing. He is standing and pulling on the rope to gain motion in order to swing. The boy is wearing a tee shirt and shorts and what appear to be white tennis shoes. The image of the boy is in black and white; the rope and the life preserver are in color. The rope appears to be made of natural materials, like sisal, thick and strong like what is used by the Navy and Coast Guard. The life preserver is bright red-orange with white stripes. The child's facial expression, his furrowed eyebrows and pouting lip, suggests frustration. The tumble-down air conditioner and water pipe seem to indicate that this isn't the safest place for a child to play.

<u>Visual Design elements: Life Preserver Swing</u>

The visual design elements in Life Preserver Swing include line, texture, intensity, space, hierarchy, balance, contrast, scale, dominance, layers, borders, and framing.

The life preserver in this image is a high **intensity** red-orange, drawing the eye's attention to it and creating a sense of alarm. It also establishes **dominance** while surrounded by less colorful elements. The **balance** in the image is asymmetrical, as the intensity of the life preserver's color is heavier in weight than the boy. But, if the rope serves to divide the picture in equal halves, the upper portion of the boy is counterweighted by his lower portion on the life preserver. The water pipe and falling-down air conditioner unit create **borders** that **frame** the image. Within the frame, there are near equal amounts of negative **space** around the boy, focusing the viewer's attention on the boy standing on the life preserver. The **scale** of the image and life preserver are life-sized; the image is literal because of the absence of exaggeration. The image consists of several **layers**, including where the boy's hand overlaps the rope and where the life preserver overlaps the boy's legs. The brick wall also serves as a painted layer and offers a rough **texture** as well. The **hierarchy** of the image begins with the intensely-colored life preserver, followed by the boy's expression.

<u>Visual Rhetorical devices: Life Preserver Swing</u>

The visual rhetorical devices in Life Preserver Swing include evidence, irony, synecdoche, metaphor and narrative.

The young boy wants to play and be adventurous. He hops into the life preserver swing hanging by a heavy rope and hoping to have some fun. At first glance, it's not obvious why he would have such a frustrated expression on his face. The answer can be

found in the content of a life preserver: a urethane foam core. It is light, it works well in water, and it is utterly useless for building the kind of momentum needed to get a swing going. It is **ironic** that he has chosen something that has the general shape of a tire and should perform well if physics aren't involved. The boy's realization that the life preserver won't work as a swing is an indication that he is assembling **evidence**. The **synecdoche** at work is that of the life preserver and the rationale for why it would just be laying around like an old, unused tire. The life preserver significantly represents the work to rescue people from drowning in the flood. It is no longer in use, if it ever was. The intensity of the life preserver's color suggest that it didn't see a lot of action in the rescue effort, perhaps leading to it being discarded and re-deployed as a makeshift swing. The frustrated boy could also be a synecdoche for every child in New Orleans unable to move forward. This image extends the **narrative** that Banksy tells, about the need for children to play and the inadequate means to make that happen. This inability to move forward on a life preserver could also serve as a **metaphor** for the lack of momentum that characterized the inadequate recovery effort in the poorer neighborhoods of New Orleans.

Pentad Sketch: Life Preserver Swing

The Most Dominant feature of the Pentad in this image is **purpose**, or the inability to achieve forward momentum—while playing on a swing or in the post-Katrina recovery effort. The Second Most Dominant part of the Pentad in this drama is the **agent**, the boy. The rest of the Pentad now falls into place:

Scene	A frustrated boy is attempting to swing on a life preserver like a tire swing.
Act	Trying to make the life preserver move.
Agent	Boy
Agency	Boy standing on the life preserver and pulling the rope backwards as he pushes his feet forward.
Purpose	To call attention to the inability to enjoy childhood or generate forward momentum in post-Katrina New Orleans.

This **Purpose: Agent** ratio suggests that Banksy's motive for creating this particular drama was to **call attention to the fact that children should not be responsible for creating the momentum forward**. Children should be encouraged to be children. No child should know the frustration of wanting momentum but being stifled by inadequate resources. A life preserver can be a welcome gift during when someone is overcome by water. However, Banksy visited New Orleans three years after Hurricane Katrina; by that time, life preservers had long overstayed their welcome and were useless to those who wanted to move forward. Banksy seems to be arguing that the lack of momentum in post-Katrina New Orleans was a product of inadequate resources and neglect. The nation was suffering from disaster fatigue and allowing the people of New Orleans to persist in a form of joyless stasis. And the children were not happy.

6. Girl on stool

Girl on Stool, also known as "Rat Girl" is placed on the side of a building across the corner of North Villere St. at St. Ann St. in New Orleans, Louisiana. The wall is built by layered red brick with thick tan paint peeling off the facade. The image depicts a very frightened young girl standing on top of a stool. To her lower left and on the ground is a large street rat. She appears to be screaming at the sight of the rat, but the rat does not look too agitated. Both images appear to be life-size in scale, though the rat is noticeably large. The wheat paste image of the young girl holding her purse and standing on a "poor man's chair" (a three legged stool) is black and white. The rat is "discovered" art from an area where paint has been stripped off the brick wall in a shape resembling a rat's body. The rat is sitting up while facing the frightened young girl. Two black, spray painted circles form the rat's ears, while the same black spray paint was used to create the rat's thick and curvy tail. The rat's two whiskers, done by spray paint or paint marker, are formed from lines extending out from the nose and also pointing in the direction of the girl. The young girl is wearing a nostalgic 1950s play dress along with folded socks and dress shoes. She is holding a purse in her left hand while her right arm is bent upward to

place her hand near her mouth. She screams in fright at the sight of the rat. She is alone and left to fend for herself.

<u>Visual Design elements: Girl on stool</u>

The visual design elements in Girl on stool include line, texture, direction, tension, space, hierarchy, balance, contrast, scale, layers, framing, and borders.

The image of "Rat Girl" contains multiple **layers**, including the fact that the image is layered on a deteriorating painted wall over a red brick building. The girl's shoes also overlap the top of the stool, and her forearm is layered in front of her upper arm. The **texture** of the remaining paint is smooth, while the red brick is rough, creating a **contrast** of texture. The deteriorating paint creates a **border** that **frames** the viewer's focus on the young girl and the rat. **Tension** is detected from the opposing shapes of the sharply pointed nose of the rat and the curvilinear outline of the young girl. The closer the rat gets to the girl, the higher the tension. This aspect of tension being heightened or released also pertains to **space** and the distance that these two figures have between each other. Color and hue contrasts can be noted between the soft coloring of the paint on the wall compared to the black coloring of the young girl's dress, the dark brick of the rat's body, and the black painted ears, tail, and whiskers. The texture and tonal contrast also drives attention to the young girl and the rat. The **scale** of the young girl is life size; the rat she confronts seems to be larger than normal, but not out of the range of large rat sizes. The **hierarchy** of the image is established by a top-to-bottom sequence, starting with the girl's face and leading from her gaze to the rat. The girl is **dominant** in size and in shape, but her reaction seems out of proportion to the circumstance. This is the only painting in Banksy's eight NOLA Children where an existing element, the peeling paint

off the brick, interacts with a painted element.

The visual rhetorical devices in Girl on Stool include metaphor, narrative, argument, and irony.

The rat doesn't look like he is purposefully menacing the girl, but the sight of him frightens her nonetheless. She is on a stool that isn't tall enough to protect her if the rat were out to get her. Rats are common icons for Banksy who says they "exist without permission…and have no respect for the hierarchy of society" (Banksy, 2001). But, Banksy says this with a sense of admiration for rats. He claims they would be good role models for those who feel "dirty, insignificant, or unloved" (Banksy, 2001). In this case, the young girl is unable to see the appeal, screaming out of fright and unable to get the rat to scatter away. He just looks at her. The **narrative** here is one of futility and uselessness. The girl's screams are useless, the stool she is standing on is inadequate, and her fear of rats is misplaced in this instance. While rats often are emblems for disease and filth, this one isn't causing any apparent harm. The girl is a **metaphor** for polite society, of which rats have no regard. Notably, even though she is gripped in fear, she still manages to keep her little purse handles properly gripped in her left hand. The hand to the mouth gesture seems overplayed, as if she were acting according to what she's been told girls do around rats—rather than from any real danger from this particular rat. Still, it is easy to have empathy for her. Rats are common after a flood, and they are not playthings. She is right to be cautious. But, clearly, she'd rather be window shopping with her friends and enjoying her pretense at being a grown up than having to deal with a street rat of significant size. This begs the question of where the stool came from. The stool is a

metaphor as well; it can be compared to the list of inadequate resources for children in New Orleans. This image offers an **argument** about neglecting children in precarious situations, offering them few skills for self-protection beyond the ability to get up on a little stool and scream for their lives at a rat who doesn't seem fazed by the commotion. This little girl is definitely not prepared for the kind of trauma that visited the children of New Orleans in 2005. Again, **irony** is featured here, as it is ironic to see this young girl so needlessly traumatized by a standoff with a rat. Her gentile life and little girl activities have been turned upside-down.

Pentad Sketch: Girl on Stool

For the Girl on Stool, the **purpose** of focusing the viewer's attention on the real dangers that threaten us appears to be most dominant. The Second Most Dominant feature of the Pentad is **agency.** By borrowing a line from Banksy to determine the means by which the act is accomplished, namely "existing without permission," the agent, act, and scene also come into focus.

Scene	A large rat makes eye contact with a girl standing on a stool and screaming in fright.
Act	The rat frightens the girl by his mere existence.
Agent	Rat.
Agency	Existing without permission.
Purpose	To focus our attention on the real dangers that threaten us.

This ratio of **Purpose: Agency** reveals Banksy's motive for constructing this drama as he did. Banksy asks us to **focus our attention on real dangers and learn to**

exist without permission. The little girl is innocent, but she is caught up in the superficial distractions she has been told to concern herself with. She screams with hysteria, but her screams are neither heard by anyone, nor do they seem to cause the rat any discomfort. He's not going anywhere. He exists without permission and "has no respect for the hierarchy of society." According to Banksy, anyone who feels unloved or insignificant should take rats as their role models. We should stop getting distracted by the "hierarchy of society" and attend to the real dangers posed by incompetent, neglectful, and malicious authorities.

7 & 8. Trumpet Boy 1 and 2

Trumpet Boy 1 (left) and Trumpet Boy 2 (right) are identical images from the same stencil, a unique pairing out of the eight images in Banksy's NOLA Children Series. The only substantive difference between the two paintings is their locations. The Trumpet Boy #1 image is on the wood sided porch of an abandoned house on Dumaine St. at N. Roman St. of Treme-Lafitte in New Orleans, Louisiana. Trumpet Boy #2 was also done on the porch of an abandoned house on the corner streets of France St. at N. Johnson St. in New Orleans, Louisiana. The house belonging to Trumpet boy 1 is missing

paint and wood slats; its windows are boarded up, and it stands out in the neighborhood of freshly painted, well-maintained homes. The house where Trumpet boy 2 was installed has a cinder brick structure, was painted white, and also stands out in an otherwise well-maintained neighborhood.

The images appear to be made from the same stencil with the cut-out outlining a life-sized silhouette of a young boy wearing a shirt, a hat, and shorts. He is standing straight up while playing a trumpet. The image is filled in black by spray paint. There are static lines to the right side of the silhouette which appear to be either part of the stencil, a second layer of stenciling, or done by hand. The effect, however, is to make the boy look boy look withered away. The soft silhouette of the boy suggests he has the proper posture to perform the correct trumpeting technique that will allow him to play as loudly as possible. The trumpet is also full-sized, not a small toy. The image cannot be labeled a hard silhouette because of the static lines to the right. In both images, the boy is facing to the left, just feet from the front doors of both homes. From the street, both boys appear to be painted directly behind a porch pillar, partially obscuring them from a straight-on perspective.

Visual Design elements: Trumpet Boy 1 &2

The visual design elements in Trumpet Boy 1 and 2 include line, texture, direction, space, balance, contrast, scale, dominance, layers, framing, and borders.

The images of the Trumpet Boys are similar enough that they can be treated as one image for this visual design analysis. The only real difference between the two images relative to visual design elements are the façade textures (wood slats vs. painted bricks) and distinctive borders. Trumpet Boy 1 and Trumpet Boy 2 both have windows at

about the same distance behind them, but though is boarded up. Notably, the porch in

Trumpet Boy 1 boasts two sets of steps that serve to center the image between them. A

wider single set of steps leads up to the porch on Trumpet Boy 2 and leads the eye to the

door itself.

The images are both made from black spray paint, creating a soft silhouette of a

boy playing a trumpet with static lines to the right side of the boy. The rough **texture** of

the remaining white paint on the wood slats (1) or the white painted cinder bricks (2)

contrasts with the dark silhouette. The black spray painted silhouette and static lines are

a **layer** over the facades. The static **lines** echo the **direction** the boy and trumpet are

facing; together, they direct the viewer's attention to the doors and entrance to the home.

The **scale** of both the soft silhouette boy and the trumpet are real-life sized. The **borders**

from both window openings and the porch pillars create a **frame** and help to maintain

focus on the trumpet boy. Both images are surrounded by large negative **space**, also

helping to maintain focus on the image. The dark black spray paint against the light

colored homes lends **dominance** to the image. Even with the restricted usage of

stenciling, the addition of what appear to be intention static lines creates a sense of

movement.

Visual Rhetorical devices: Trumpet Boy 1 & 2

The visual rhetorical devices in Trumpet Boy 1 & 2 include Metaphor,

identification, enthymeme, and synecdoche.

There is a **metaphor** operating in the trumpet boy images as they relate to the

houses on which they are painted. The houses are abandoned, devoid of life. This can be

compared to the silhouetted image, lacking dimension, it suggests a shadow, a referent to

and remnant of the past. Both the home and the boy are lifeless, waiting. But there is a complex and more clarifying figurative element at work as well. Like all the silhouettes, the trumpet boys can be compared to a tattoo on skin, a black image inked onto the surface. In these images, the word "tattoo" has dual meaning: in a military sense, the tattoo is a signal by drummers or trumpeters to announce an end to the evening and recall soldiers to their barracks. The trumpet boy images serve as metaphoric tattoos on each house; their trumpets serve as **synecdoches** for calling people home.

The trumpet serves as synecdoche in additional ways. The trumpet is related to an alarm, perhaps trying to gain attention to the abandoned home. It is also significantly representative of the jazz and social culture of parades in New Orleans, making this synecdoche also resonate as an example of **identification**. Finally, the larger context of the placement of these images, especially because of the surrounding neighborhoods of well-maintained and family-filled homes, suggests a truncated argument or **enthymeme**. Before these houses were torn down, Banksy's choice of location for both images signals a "trumpet call" to gain our attention before viewers lose the opportunity to focus on the devastation in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Banksy had to know the trumpet boys would quickly disappear with these abandoned and devastated homes. His placement of the images, in this case especially, forces the viewer to see the contrast, to see the devastation, and to remember that both homes once belonged to families and their children, soon to be erased from the landscape. The disjunctive enthymeme would be structured like this: Either you look now, or you will miss what this neighborhood, this home, and this porch used to be about.

Pentad Sketch: Trumpet Boys

As with the other silhouettes in the series, these Trumpet Boys become part of the Most Dominant part in the drama: the **scene**. The scene includes the images and their location on the porches of corner lot homes in otherwise well-maintained neighborhoods. The **purpose** of the drama is the Second Most Dominant part of the Pentad here and includes what is not part of the scene, specifically the authorities who have, to this point, looked away from these remnants of the past. The rest of the Pentad can now be sorted out:

Scene	Silhouette of a boy playing a trumpet on the porches of abandoned, devastated corner homes in well-maintained neighborhoods.
Act	A shadow of what once was.
Agent	Missing authorities.
Agency	Authorities looking away.
Purpose	To force attention to the devastation and memorialize a scene that is soon to be erased.

This ratio, **Scene: Purpose**, also suggests a motive for Banksy's construction of this particular drama. The artist placed a temporary "tattoo" on these street corners, **forcing attention to the devastation and serving to memorialize a scene that is soon to be erased.** His motive for the drama he created is directly tied to the placement of these images, forcing the viewer to question what is not there: activity, attention, and remedy. These identical dramas each highlight a particular home within a surrounding

community. The soft silhouette of the boy and his trumpet forces viewers to see the

homes, with the static lines directing attention towards their entrances. The trumpet boys

and the homes they are painted on stand in stasis; they suggest no activity or movement

apart from the unseen, gradual deterioration from neglect. These homes contrast starkly

with their surrounding communities. They stand out like "sore thumbs," and would

provoke those who prefer more pleasing landscapes to look away. Banksy's placement of

these images doesn't permit turning away; he forces the viewer to look at the image in the

larger context of the surrounding neighborhoods, the sense of belonging they once

shared, the devastation from the 2005 hurricane and floods, and the authorities who are

nowhere to be seen.

CONCLUSION

Through this process, I learned a great deal about the artist known as Banksy. His early experience, when he was falsely blamed for an incident that resulted in another child's serious injury, may have been responsible for his art's theme of children and the injustices those in authority force upon them. Banksy's identity is unknown, and yet his work is easily recognizable. He works in open areas, day and night, and yet he's never seen in the act of painting beyond the face-concealing pictures and video footage he's allowed and arranged in advance. He maintains an active website and publishes catalogs of his works. He has gained access to high security locations, including museums and military facilities. Some have speculated that Banksy is more than one man; his artwork has been described as a group "movement." Footage from the film *Exit Through The Gift Shop* reveals that Banksy has a crew to support his work, but Banksy is one man. Banksy is a firm believer that capitalism and consumerism will be the downfall to the human race, which he portrays as rats in his works. Rats live in close proximity to human beings. As Banksy says, "If you feel dirty, insignificant or unloved, then rats are a good role model. They exist without permission, they have no respect for the hierarchy of society, and they have sex 50 times a day" (Banksy, 2001).

Banksy can be described as a visual activist. As mentioned before, Banksy doesn't make money from his public graffiti, many of which are stolen directly off the doors or the sides of the building on which they were painted. He donates to charity any profit his art has generated. He has painted in selected locations around the world, including New York, Mexico, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Ghana, Disneyland, the West Bank Wall, and England. Banksy has often painted children innocently trying to enjoy

their lives in the midst of disaster and destruction. He forces us to acknowledge that children are the essential victims, coping with the emotional trauma inflicted on them by their threatening situations, including the effects of child labor and slavery. Banksy also uses images of white children to attract viewers who might otherwise look away from horrible situations involving non-white children. This strategy recalls the line from the 1989 movie, *A Time to Kill*. When the black father of a young girl is on trial, with an all-white jury, for having killed the two white rapists who left her for dead, the defense attorney asks the jury to close their eyes and then, in excruciating detail, tells the story of the horrible ordeal the daughter had to suffer. He then adds, "Now imagine she's white." Banksy is trying to hold to account those authorities who have allowed (or caused) the suffering of any children.

In Banksy's early career, he would tag his name alongside his images. As a consequence of his developing ethos, his later work now stands for itself and is easily recognizable without tags given the strategies he uses to create his paintings. None of his images in New Orleans contain names or titles; all can be called "non-verbal" except for the chalkboard writing of the Simpsons Boy. The labels used to identify the paintings in this study and online were developed by fans who presumably used their own interpretations to define and name them.

Banksy uses the strategy of "presence" to place the images in relevant, often dramatic locations that inform the overall reading of the artifacts. Banksy's artwork lives in the moment; the fact that his works are often vandalized or stolen within 24 hours of their painting doesn't seem to bother him. He continues to travel the world and install new collections wherever he decides the location demands it. When he places multiple

images within the same city or town, they can only be connected chronologically as a sequence if, like in New York, he does one a day and they are immediately inventoried one after the other. Otherwise, it is hard to conduct a narrative analysis on a series of paintings; as in New Orleans, the entire set became known as residents of the city were returning after evacuation from Hurricane Gustav. The common themes and patterns in a series can connect the images into a larger whole.

This study has also increased my knowledge of visual design. The strategies and principles explored here initially seemed to overlap, but a closer reading will help to distinguish one concept from another. It is also true that knowing the elements of visual design helps us to apply them using the principles. Being able to identify the importance of certain elements is a product of understanding "hierarchy" and "dominance" and the role "contrast" plays in emphasizing one element over another. Contrast, in fact, can be achieved through several strategies, including the use of size and shape difference, placement, direction, or color. By identifying what is important in an image, it then becomes easier to map out the Pentadic relationships between different parts of the "drama." This is especially important for Banksy's works. As noted earlier, his works are often initially provocative but require closer reading to determine the underlying argument. Banksy's use of visual design elements and principles actually lends credibility to his work, enhancing his ethos in the process.

As for visual rhetoric, I spent a long time trying to understand the various strategies from textual rhetoric that could be applied to visual images. The scholarship on visual rhetoric is emerging but is, currently, thin compared to established concepts in visual design. Relatively recent theorists have collectively tried to establish an operating

framework for visual rhetoric beyond analogizing to Aristotle's three modes of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. Roughly translated to mean credibility, emotional appeals, and logical appeals, artifacts as diverse as charts, paintings, sculptures, video games, and webpages can be analyzed for their rhetorical effectiveness. Barthes identified three types of rhetorical messages including the linguistic, the coded, and the non-coded. As Sonja Foss later argued, rhetorical visual artifacts must contain the three characteristics of symbolism, human intervention, and presentation to an audience for the purpose of communicating a message. Relative to Banksy's works, Barthes would classify them as "coded"; Foss would say they encompass the three characteristics of symbolism, human intervention, and public dissemination and communication. As rhetorical artifacts, Banksy's works operate on established ethos. They also appeal to our emotions, especially through the use of innocent children, and they make logical appeals through metaphor and other syllogistic constructions the viewers are tasked with filling in.

The three research questions that drove this study can now be answered, one at a time. **Principles of rhetoric can be implemented through visual design** by using vivid elements that create coded messages, identification achieved through presence, and the use of visual analogues to textual ethos, pathos, and logos. By identifying the important parts of each visual drama and creating a ratio, Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Pentad can be applied to visual images to establish the rhetor's motives.

Visual strategies work, in a selected series of images, to evoke a collective response through the use of "scattering" repeated themes and images. These themes and images suggest a "gestalt," a wholeness out of the separate paintings in Banksy's NOLA

Children Series. The use of "contrast" within paintings, specifically black and white images that sometimes contain splashes of intense color, also helps to establish the series as a collective whole. The silhouettes in Banksy's series, too, use a simpler argument tied to the more complex images through the suggested innocence and the willingness of each child to do as they are told. The white children and seemingly non-white silhouettes help to keep the children bound together by their childhood, as opposed to their race. The nostalgic dress on the two painting of girls, the innocence of the years of swinging on a tire, the playing of a trumpet, and the flying of a kite; all of these images work together to evoke a common sentiment of recognition and empathy from the viewer. Even the Simpsons Boy, with his skateboard and Bart-like clothing, suggests a simpler time when teachers would punish students by making them write repeated statements on the chalkboard. The days of 1950s party dresses, flying kites, playing trumpets, and swinging on tires are gone with the wind and the rain and the flooding of New Orleans. These children, especially the silhouettes, all speak of a childhood that has been disrupted and distorted by the authorities who were supposed to protect them.

Finally, **rhetorical theory and visual design, in combination, teach us about Banksy's rhetorical motives** for creating the eight dramas in the NOLA Children series. Banksy is using visual design elements, probably learned on his own, and the visual strategies of rhetoric to teach his viewers that authorities need to be held accountable for their betrayal of the children of New Orleans. Incompetence, and even malfeasance basically robbed the children of their heritage, left them reaching for umbrellas that would not help them from drowning and hanging on to life preservers that would not swing. Banksy leaves hints all over New Orleans on what he believes happened, who to

blame, what can be done, and what must be done to lead the community to recovery. He

advocates for a remedy that relies on local connections and community leaders who will

be honest to the citizens, seek solutions to a faulty levee system, and not leave them

barricaded in their homes when the flooding starts. A levee built, ineffectively, to protect

New Orleans from flooding ended up failing and causing the deaths of over 1,800 people.

But, this was not an unpredictable disaster, and that must never be forgotten. The

surviving generations need to work to rebuild their communities, remember their tragedy

and those they lost, and trust in each other to collectively find a way forward.

New studies are beginning to identify the long-term impact of Hurricane Katrina

on those who were children in New Orleans in 2005. In a May 18, 2017 article titled *My

City, My Money, My Anxiety,* freelance writer Angela Colley discusses growing up in

New Orleans post-Katrina and how that disaster affects her life in the city now. Colley

identifies a series of statistics that underscore the scope and scale of the impact on those

who were, like her, children at the time Katrina made landfall in their city:

"In 2012, the Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies conducted interviews

with predominately African-American middle school students in New Orleans.

Nearly 25 percent showed symptoms of depression. A third had symptoms of

post-traumatic stress disorder at some point, while 21 percent showed PTSD

symptoms at the time of the study.

In another study in 2015, the IWES interviewed more than 1,000 pre-teens

and teens. Nearly 20 percent showed signs of PTSD" (Colley, par. 14).

Nationally, only 8 percent of children aged 12-17 reported suffering from

depression, and only 4 percent of children nationwide were suffering from PTSD. The

numbers for children and young adults in New Orleans are between three and five times

the national rate. Additionally, Colley says that home vacancy rates have plummeted to 8

percent in the city, and rental rates have gone up 6-8 percent a year since 2012. The

number of mental health professionals in New Orleans has also decreased from pre-

Katrina levels in a state with the highest murder rate in the country, and in a city with the

fifth highest murder rate. The author claims that, "Poverty, crime, and slow progress

(social and otherwise)—have resurfaced" as the biggest social issues the city's residents

face, along with the exceptionally high rates of mental health challenges for those who

were children in 2005.

It is important to note that Banksy does not appear to place the blame for this

catastrophe in New Orleans on the parents of those children who were most affected by

the aftermath. Instead, Banksy identifies those authorities with the power and the

responsibility to prevent the catastrophic flooding through well-designed and maintained

levees and flood walls, along with those charge to deal with the disaster and its aftermath.

Those who point to the magnitude of the Hurricane, or the unexpected breach of the

levees, or to the poverty and crime rates that have long-plagued New Orleans, are merely

deflecting and looking away from the impact their negligence, incompetence, and self-

interest inflicted on children. From the descriptions in Angela Colley's article, it appears

that they are still "looking away."

Future research on Banksy himself will probably focus on uncovering his identity,

which would be a shame. His incognito status actually lends credibility to his effort to

work on behalf of others. I hope, instead, researchers turn to looking for patterns and

themes in other cities where Banksy has visited. They could look into the possibility that

Banksy's paintings of children across the globe share a common theme, including the idea that all children have the right to be children, to "exist without permission," as Banksy claimed of his own art. In areas where there is a known and documented sequence of paintings, the role of narrative theory could be introduced to further our understanding of Banksy as a storyteller. And yet, viewing these works as individual "dramas" has turned out to be a fertile choice. Not only do we gain insight into Banksy's rhetorical motives through Burke's method, but we begin to understand why Banksy chooses his locations and the works he installs. As a corollary to his desire to save the world, we now recognize that Banksy's preferred method for accomplishing this goal is to consider the little children who will inherit the social, political, economic, and environmental choices we make today.

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